

PRISON JOURNAL NO. 8

1989



CENSORSHIP



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PRISON JOURNAL NO. 8

In jail, censorship is a fact of life:
mail is censored, visits are censored
Within the prison world, censorship involves
conformity to or challenging of a number of codes,
those of the authorities or the prisoners themselves.

The underlying issue is whether extreme forms of
censorship are justified or necessary. Or whether
they are unwarranted intrusions into one's basic rights,
those which *must* remain even in a prison context.

Peter Murphy and Loyd Johnsen, Editors

Maureen Nicholson, Managing Editor

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Erling Christensen, Hendrik Hoekema, Glen McDougall

CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY

APR 6 1990

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Ethos

Prison, like so many other of our social institutions, is a microcosm of society at large. We believe, no doubt in part because we are forced to live or have chosen to work within its boundaries, that it is a most potent and revealing one; and hence springs our desire to use **Prison Journal** to explore the world of imprisonment and to attempt to understand the psychological, social, and political relations which lead to its impasse.

The language of prison—lock and key, gate and pass, penitence and punishment—strains at the limits of metaphor and euphemism, just as the reality of the prison pushes against the walls of society's often too easy compartmentalizing of normality and deviance, legality, and criminality. To put the case bluntly, the prison is a symbol of our collective failure as a society: where better to look than into the complexities of this dark symbol for some clarity on our shared plight?

Prison Journal has three aims: to provide an arena for the captive voices of those who are imprisoned; to be a spotlight of raw illumination on their condition; and to offer a forum to all those concerned with carrying out a serious examination of the phenomenon of the prison. The prisoners and staff of the Simon Fraser University Prison Education Program and others interested in writing and prison wrote **Prison Journal No. 8: Censorship**.

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Of Censorship and Prisons Some Modest Proposals

"Censor" is a Janus-like word meaning at once that which is officially sanctioned and/or officially suppressed. Historical roots lead back to those ancient Roman magistrates who supervised public morals, to those figures of authority who determine what behaviour and expression are appropriate and legitimate. The process, in both its positive and negative features, begins, of course, very early. We have all been heavily censored in our conduct by our parents, the surrogates of those ancient magistrates and of society, with whose values we are initiated and indoctrinated. But what of those who, for whatever reasons, failed to learn their lessons properly or, worse yet, wilfully refused to put them into practice? For some of them, there is "re-schooling," as supplied by the Correctional Service of Canada [CSC]. One of the most startling and revealing insights for the would-be decipherer of the prison is that this world is, finally—and there is no other word for it—childish. Incarcerated adults are, via bureaucratic sleight-of-hand, transformed into "children." Then, in the most heavily censored environment in our society, they are asked to act as mature, responsible adults. Amazingly enough, some actually do.

In Mordecai Richler's *Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang*, young Jacob is sent to Slimers' Isle Gaol for Children for that most serious of crimes, "being rude to an adult." His liberation turns upon the startling discovery that his villainous keeper, the Hooded Fang, is, horror of horrors, "childish." ("He's one of us!") Jacob is a child, and he can be safely released into the recognizance of his family so as to carry on with growing up. In Albert Camus' fairytale for adults, *The Outsider*, Meursault is censored and condemned for strangely familiar reasons, namely, "being rude to adults"; he fails to conduct himself "properly" at his mother's funeral, and rejects the "higher" conventional values of the Examining Magistrate and the Priest, both of whom regard him as a wayward "child." The modern prison, that child prodigy of the Enlightenment, has grown into an *enfant terrible*.

Within the prison world, censorship involves conformity to or challenging of a number of codes, whether those of the authorities or the prisoners themselves. In *Prison Journal* No. 8, the essays by Charles Berg, Eddie Rouse, and Erle MacAulay document specific instances, ranging from conversational privacy in personal visits, to Commissioner's Directives [CDs] on prohibited reading material, to the question of which submissions should be accepted in

Prison Journal itself. The underlying issue is whether extreme forms of censorship are justified or necessary or whether they are unwarranted intrusions into one's basic rights, those which must remain even within a prison context. Antonio Curcio's "Letter from Attica" details the difficulties, for those confined to the Special Handling Unit [SHU], of even being able to raise their questions about the excessive forms of censorship in effect there. In addition to this legalistic wrangle between prisoners and the administration, **Prison Journal** explores "self-censorship" within the prison population. General Population [GP] inmates censure the behaviour (if not the very existence) of Protective Custody [PC] inmates—"rats" and "skinners" in prison parlance—whose particular crimes or behaviour within the institution are deemed unacceptable. This internecine skirmishing calls into question the continuance of **Prison Journal**: GP prisoner-students have objected vehemently to the inclusion of PC writings, arguing that censorship in this case might be justifiable.

The interviews with prisoner-students at Kent, Matsqui, Mountain, and William Head Institutions which are at the centre of **Prison Journal No. 8** raise, among other questions, this volatile point. If, at times, the discussion may appear to take the form of a "modest proposal" (without Swift's sense of satire), there is an acceptance of sorts of the right of each party to have his say, at least in this issue. Providing an historical context, Bill Mackey examines the GP/PC duality, probing how definitions have shifted as the distinction has become more entrenched.

The question of censorship and self-censorship in prison cannot be simply pigeonholed as a sociopathology that is somehow distinct from the issues of censorship debated on the "outside." Roy Aney's examination of repression raises the question of censorship in its psychosocial dimensions and shows "censorship" in prison to be only an extreme manifestation of a larger cultural pattern. Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent* (reviewed here by Ronald McGivern) amplifies this point. Herman and Chomsky make it painfully obvious that the only institution more heavily censored than the prison in our society is the mass media, especially when it comes to political issues such as those in Central America and Nicaragua. And this fact poses a more perplexing challenge than prison censorship (which is, after all, transparently obvious in its exercise of authority): unless we can find ways of accommodating dissenting points of view, we will all be confined to some sort of Slimers' Isle Gaol in which self-appointed censors tell us what to think so that we don't have to think for ourselves as adults.

Peter Murphy

Writing Off the **Prison Journal**

An open letter from prisoner Erle G. MacAulay on behalf of the Matsqui Prisoners' Justice Initiative, the Matsqui Student Union, and the Matsqui Prisoners' Committee.

Recently, the **Prison Journal** [PJ] published authors whose origins are other than the General Population of prisoners or their supporters. In fact, the editors have included writing by the inherent enemies of prisoners, specifically ex-prison guards and those exiled to Protective Custody [PC]. The editors claim that this inclusion was in the name of freedom of speech; that these individuals share the prison experience; and, therefore, should have some input into the **Journal**. From the prisoner's perspective, this act is absurd—a sacrilege! The opinion of most prisoners and their supporters is unanimous: if prisoners are not allowed control over **Prison Journal** content and contributors, *we* will not be contributors. After I personally decided to write off the **Prison Journal**, a professor on the PJ editorial board suggested that those who feel as I do should place one last article, expressing our disgust and giving the reasons for our silence.

We prisoners have always viewed the PJ as *our* window to the world. The PJ was a publication that would publish our material when all other forms of media rejected our opinions, experiences, and concerns. Typically, the media have been satisfied with the rhetorical sensationalization of prisoners as animals, and our thoughts and expressions as trivial. It now seems that the PJ editors have taken this same perspective concerning the value of our opinion of what the **Prison Journal** should be. The editors view our dismay over the eligibility of our enemies to share PJ space as a typical example of social ostracism—or as the need for us to have an enemy in order to define our own virtues. The very topic of this issue of the PJ, “Censorship,” appears as a veiled attempt to show that, while prisoners find fault with most censorship, they are hypocritical in wishing to censor undesirables out of the PJ. Unfortunately, the editors miss the point. We don't care if there is a PC and PIG Journal; we just refuse to share the same bedspace with those individuals in the **Prison Journal**.

Most straight people, including the editors, do not understand why prisoners would object to having their hearts and words placed alongside those of guards, child molesters, informants, and rapists. This lack of appreciation comes from the failure to understand and accept why we despise them. To most, all prisoners are the same. But for those who have supported the **Prison Journal**, I will try to explain why this is not so. My goal is to remedy the blasphemous

intrusion into the perceived sanctity of the PJ—or to let readers know that the words within future **Prison Journals** will come, not from prisoners and their supporters, but from the Keepers, their cohorts, and scum. If no remedy is forthcoming, then perhaps the readers' refusal to participate in this mockery will succeed where our attempted explanations and our protests have failed.

Prison guards actively, day in and day out, participate in the atrocity that is called "Corrections Canada." Through their scheming and abuse, or through their silence and chosen ignorance, they succeed in destroying—physically, mentally, and spiritually—the lives of thousands of men and women every year. As in the Bible, the Keepers of men and women are the lowest of the low—not because they are the enforcers of the public's need for protection, but because they are the enforcers of the State's lust for absolute control. We don't claim that the *person* behind the starched uniform is evil, for *most* are simply people. Rather it is the *role* that the person has chosen to play which offends the ideals of humanity and justice. Philip Zimbardo's study of prisoner/guard roles, involving average university students, proved clearly that *most people put in the position of Guard will respond with abuse of their powers in a prison environment*. It seems to be the nature of the beast.

Prison administrators also condone and even encourage activities that Amnesty International has classified as forms of torture. These activities include persistent harassment of prisoners and their visitors, abuse of segregation facilities, zealous use of violence and mace against incapacitated prisoners, denial of sleep, and a multitude of other tactics. We, therefore, feel that they have no right to be in the **Prison Journal**. They are not prisoners and, by their chosen trade, obviously do not support or even understand the plight of prisoners. Further, guards' opinions are readily invited into many different media of public expression, whereas ours are not.

Those convicted of committing acts of sexual violence against women and children are not permitted in the General Population of any worthy prison for a number of reasons. First, these twisted and foul ghouls typically attempt to ply their "craft" inside prison against the weaker amongst us. This attempt is as intolerable to us as it was to you. Second, a significant number of prisoners were once abused themselves. So there is a personal grievance against allowing these fiends to live amongst us, or, in fact, to live at all. Further, it is perceived that to allow them to coexist with us here would be to condone their actions. Thus we would allow ourselves to be classified in the same rank as they are, as the media do with their stereotypical image of prisoners. And, finally, there is our tremendous anger and anxiety over the values the State imposes on all Canadians when they repeatedly give obscenely light sentences to a child molester and, in the same breath, harshly sentence people for financially-inspired, victimless crimes. Like, where are your heads (and hearts) at?

These feelings typically turn to rage when this filth is the first to be given a parole. I can't find the words to describe the reaction from prisoners to the public's outcry for an even *more* inhumane system of injustice for *all* prisoners when another skinner (rapist) goes out and murders some innocent the first day of his parole.

And then there's the State informants. In a sense, these individuals are the worst of the lot: informants posing as prisoners who will either entrap a prisoner in a compromising position or fabricate a total lie for personal gain. A "trusted and reliable source" need only drop a kite (that is, file a report) for his sick imagination to become his victim's worst nightmare. Again, these creeps are the first out the door on parole. And, if they ever get sent back to prison, they know that with a little effort and imagination they can Judas their way out quickly enough. Many prisoners are serving outrageous sentences while their "accomplices" walk away scot-free because they have sold out others to take their place. Many informants commit crimes at will with a blanket of immunity to protect them from prosecution. Clifford Olson, the infamous child molester and murderer, was allowed easy release numerous times for his assistance to the State. Would anyone like to be classified with the likes of that sicko? The PJ editors may find Olson's views valuable, but I'm sure they stand alone.

State agitators, on the other hand, are those who present themselves as prisoners, but in reality are the servants of an ill-willed State. These parasites receive favours as do their brothers, the informants. But their currency isn't information, it's treachery. They receive their orders from the Keepers to put out false information to discredit real prisoners in the eyes of other prisoners, plant something on a prisoner or in his cell, extract some information required, or draw the unwitting into an illegal act. I have seen perfectly stand-up guys get murdered because they were labelled by the State's pawns; and many more prisoners get set up and, consequently, sent to a higher-security prison. These activities are often directed against prisoners deemed to be too influential amongst the prison population. Leaders in the prison population must walk lightly in fear of being trapped or labelled by this scum. The deaths, the beatings, the level of suspicion created by the State are only part of the losses incurred. In addition, there are a great number of prisoners who refuse to participate in the fight for their rights for fear they will be marked for retribution or elimination. Who can argue that prisoners suffering at the hands of these swine do not have reasonable grounds to demand that the PJ remain free of their ramblings, however literate?

It is interesting to note that one of the editorial policies of the **Prison Journal** is to show readers that prisoners are not a homogeneous group; that in fact they are individuals with different interests and ideas, just like "real people." Prisoners display the same status and power differentiation experienced by

people on the outside. However, it seems the PJ editors are now refusing to apply this philosophy by assuming that prisoners are all the same, regardless of their crimes, their solidarity, or level of integrity. Prisoners cannot be grouped together any more than the citizens of Canada, or even Vancouverites, could be grouped together as homogeneous. General Population prisoners are as different from Protective Custody prisoners as anarchists are from capitalists. To lump or pigeonhole all persons imprisoned in Canada as a particular class of people is a blatant misrepresentation of the truth.

We prisoners refuse to be classified alongside these State-created and -cultured abominations. We refuse to share anything with them. They are not prisoners. They do not share our oppressed reality. They cannot sympathize with our cause and plight, as they are another species altogether, have sold their souls for material gains, or escaped from prison by causing real prisoners to suffer. I have no interest in reading their lies, their hypocrisy, or knowing of their lives. These creatures are beyond contempt and recognition. If the **Prison Journal** wishes to include them, then the Journal will have to fill its pages with them, since no self-respecting prisoner or supporter will either contribute or acknowledge the **Journal**'s existence. It is truly sad that the forum for the thoughts and expressions of prisoners should be contaminated. The loss will surely be all of ours. No longer will prisoners have a medium that will print their material, and readers who have supported us for so long will no longer have the opportunity to see, feel, and comprehend the unique and rich moments shared by prisoners. Prison walls, where this art form was born, will once again be the only medium for the testament to imprisonment. It's a hell of a long way to travel for a piece of alternative thought and expression.

Censorship can take many forms. What the editors of the **Prison Journal** are now doing, by starting to include guards and PCs in the **Journal**, will result in the return of censorship for regular prisoners. The **Journal** was born out of the recognition that prisoners weren't accepted by society's media because few citizens could relate to the prison experience. Prison literature was foreign, crude, and incomprehensible to the minds of the outside media editors. The editors of the **Journal**, non-prisoners themselves, now find our position on the **Journal** just as foreign and incomprehensible, and thus dismiss it as frivolous. I was under the impression that the **Prison Journal** existed to circumvent or at least address this very same attitude.

It has become evident that prisoners must become the editors of the **Prison Journal**, if the material in the **Journal** is truly to reflect the prison experience. I do not mean to take away from the exceptional effort that the editors and others outside of prison have put into the **Prison Journal**; for, without their effort, there would be no **Journal** at all. Nor do I suggest that the **Prison Journal** could function without the academic and editorial support contributed by the editors.

However, those editors are not able to determine accurately what encompasses the prison experience *since they lack that experience*. This fact is evident in their presumption that anyone imprisoned in or working at a prison is part of it. Technically, they may be right. But the reality of the situation is that prisoners will not themselves associate with guards and PCs, nor will they accept being associated with them in the eyes of society. Further, prisoners feel that the editors create topical themes for the **Journal** which are convenient to themselves. Although “censorship” is an issue concerning prisoners, there are many more pressing issues in our minds and hearts. Whereas our issues may not be politically attractive or convenient to the editors, they are issues that *we* need to bring into the spotlight and express.

If allowed to, the Matsqui Student Union and the Matsqui Prisoners’ Justice Initiative will assume the responsibility for the editing of the **Prison Journal**. If this step, or a similar act, is not taken to ensure that prisoners have control over the **Journal**’s content and contributors, the results will doubtless be the death of the **Prison Journal** in everything but name—and, quite possibly, even that, too. I can’t imagine the **Journal** supporters accepting the **Prison Journal** minus the prisoners. I ask on behalf of the real prisoners that they do not. If the PCs and guards want to collaborate on a journal of their own, great. But stay the hell out of ours.

We trust that prisoners and prisoner supporters who read this open letter will let it be known to the **Prison Journal** editors that they will not participate in any fashion, if the editors do not accept the reality of prison life in Canada: prisoners will not share the **Prison Journal** with its enemies. I would like to add that, while prisoners may in the future be absent from the pages of the PJ, should the editors not take corrective action, we will most certainly be heard through every other channel possible in our effort to end the takeover of our literary sanctuary.

We would appreciate any assistance you can offer us. Thank you.

Erle G. MacAulay
Matsqui Prison

Censored

Distant mountains rise
blue-green and white-topped, clouds
thin and grey like a woman's skirt
touched by the wind's flow.

My imagination wanders, struggles
between what's real or isn't.

For sure there are the cement
walls of the cell closing in on me,
guards in their uniform green.

And for sure there are mountains,
distant, beyond the fences.

But at the end of the tier the iron
gate of bars locks me in, or out
with its mechanical thuds.

And in whichever landscape I choose
there will be another voice—steadily
exercising its will with
an iron determination.

Tom Elton

The Monster Created

In late March 1973, I had recently transferred to the British Columbia Penitentiary, serving a life sentence for noncapital murder. I was working at my job in the library that morning when the guard issued me a pass to go to the Classification building to see my counsellor. As the front cellblock door was being unlocked, I was joined by a friend, Rick, who was also heading for the Classification building. Starting down the long series of steps facing the front gate, I glanced to the left and noticed a group of prisoners exercising in a small fenced yard. "What's that, Rick, the exercise yard for the hole?"

"Nope," he replied. "That's for the creeps in PCU."

"PCU?" I asked. "What the hell's that?"

"Come on, Bill. You've been here for two weeks and you ain't heard of PCU? I find that hard to believe. Anyway, it's the Protective Custody Unit." Rick then pointed to a row of ground-level, barred windows below the East Wing. "Down there, there's about a dozen snivellers—you know, rats, rapos, ripoff artists. And up in the Penthouse—the hole—there's another dozen."

"Shit, man, when did this start? I was in Kingston Pen in the early sixties and there was no Protective Custody there. If some dude wanted protection, he went to the hole. Hell, no one *ever* asked the pigs to protect them. If they were scared of someone, they just stayed in their cells. Everyone did their own time in those days, minded their own business, and stayed away from the creeps."

"Whatever, who gives a fuck?" snarled Rick. "Now they've got their own unit."

And that, sixteen years ago, was the first time that I heard about the guys in Protective Custody—twenty or so, out of a thousand prisoners doing federal time in BC. By 1978, there were 1,000 federal prisoners doing their time in Protective Custody Units—roughly ten percent of the total federal prison population across Canada. Today, at least in the Province of British Columbia, nearly half of the prison population is housed in PCUs.

Canada built its first penitentiary at Kingston, Ontario, in 1835. From then until the end of the 1960s, in spite of the construction of a score or more prisons, and a drastic increase in the number of jailed Canadians (the number in federal prisons is now over 10,000), it was always "us against them." Regardless of the personal offences, sentences, likes, and dislikes amongst prisoners, it was always the prisoners (as a group) on one side and the guards on the other.

The 1970s, however, brought new ideas in penology; sentences became longer, the guard-prisoner ratio changed from one-to-twenty to one-to-one, and temporary absences/paroles became an option for early release. In spite of the changes, nonetheless, the “us against them” philosophy still prevailed. To counteract this philosophy and make prisons more manageable, a policy change was implemented by what was then the Canadian Penitentiary Service. That policy change in Ottawa resulted in the “monster”—Protective Custody. But the roots of Protective Custody, so to speak, went much deeper than protecting a few frightened prisoners from the wrath of their unfrightened counterparts. National Headquarters in Ottawa was in a quandary: how to break the solidarity of the prison population and still sell the idea (disguised as something else) to an unsuspecting and relatively naïve public.

The solution to the “us/them” problem was to divide and conquer. As the Romans had discovered over two thousand years before, power, once gained, flourishes by keeping its subjects divided. That the “divide and conquer” philosophy has worked is obvious: the Correctional Service of Canada currently imprisons 1,500 Canadians in British Columbia, now divided almost equally into two camps, each hating or actively disliking the other. And the degree of prison disturbances in the 1980s is almost minimal when compared to the riots of the previous decade, when the protection policy was just beginning to gain momentum.

However, as the reader may ask, exactly who are these prisoners who are segregated from others in the general prison population? Claire Culhane, writing in *Still Barred from Prison* (1985), explains:

[T]hey are those convicted of sex offences (skimmers); those labelled as informers (snitches); in the women's prisons, those who have abused or killed children; and, finally, those who have asked to be moved to that Unit [or entire prison these days], believing themselves to be in physical danger from other prisoners, for a variety of reasons. (p. 165)

Such reasons include personal disagreements with other prisoners, drug or gambling debts, cell thievery, or even institutional anxiety or paranoia.

Except for the two latter reasons—which could be handled through proper medical care—many of the “variety of reasons” could be settled amongst the prisoners themselves, as they were (usually without violence) before the “divide and conquer” policy came into effect. Today, because of the existence of easily accessible Protective Custody facilities, it's relatively simple to “check in” and allow the Administration to handle the problem. With sex offenders and informers, however, perhaps a solution is not as easily reached. Prisoners in these categories are severely disliked by those in the General Population. So maybe they do need protection. However, this possibility raises the question of why they were relatively safe before the PCUs were introduced.

In addition to the above, there are many cases in which the Administration places prisoners in Protective Custody. This segregation is often done as a punitive measure, such as the 1978 case of P.B., a Native Indian who was assaulted by six guards in Edmonton Maximum-Security Penitentiary. (This case was one of many investigated by Dr Vantour, who chaired the Vantour Commission Study on Murders and Assaults in the Ontario Region.) When P.B. requested that charges be laid against his assailants, an administrative tribunal investigated his case. Although "his bruised condition was testified to by a representative of the Alberta Human Rights Commission," the tribunal rejected the witnesses. When P.B. further attempted to lay charges,

he was ... speedily transferred to another region before his appointment with a Justice of the Peace could be kept in order to lay charges. [And, regardless of] his General Population status, he was forcibly transferred to a Protective Custody Unit. This places a prisoner's life in jeopardy as the news of his location spreads. He received notice of his projected transfer dated *two days after he had already been transferred*. (Culhane, 1985, p. 105)

In 1989, the CSC started to change its Protective Custody policy. The move is on now to begin reintegrating the "less serious" (whatever that means) cases back into the General Population. This move, incidentally, was suggested twelve years ago by the MacGuigan Report (1977), which states that "penitentiaries, through appropriate reforms to correctional practices, can ... substantially reduce or eliminate most Protective Custody requirements." But, then again, those who administer Canada's penal system seldom take "good advice," even from their own Parliamentary Commissions of Inquiry.

Nonetheless, in spite of its slowness of thought and action (the PCU idea, after all, resulted from a two-thousand-year-old political ideology), the CSC appears to have finally recognized the "monster" it created and is attempting to start over again. The remaining problem, unfortunately, is that, once a prisoner has been labelled "Protective Custody," that is how he will *always* be remembered. And prisoners have long memories.

The taint of the monster, whether morally right or wrong, will not disappear as quickly as it was created, with a stroke of the proverbial poison pen—a pen held, so to speak, by those persons whose livelihood is firmly entrenched in the politics of confinement.

William Mackey
William Head Prison

Outlaw's Lament

Close to being far away
Hiding out in prison
Holding dear what can't be reached
In the mind's eye's rear-view vision

High idealers digging up truffles
Teach me, baby, that Sam Browne shuffle
Roll me in a class for truants

Heat's here telling you to freeze
Red coat and copper jacket
Hollow-point bullet gonna fill you full
Heavy-barrel weapon with a light trigger-pull
Make peace or a lotta racket

Take time off till the holiday
Try not to earn the price you pay
For letting go of freedom

Patrick Duguay
Kent Prison, H Unit

Publish and/or Perish

Censorship and Self-Censorship in Prison

Censorship, like many policies within the correctional system, is simply another method of control. In a sense, censors are the gatekeepers of an institution. They examine and make judgements on all prisoner communications that come into and go out of an institution.

Censorship comes in a variety of forms and intensities. The Administrative Consolidations of the Penitentiary Service Regulations (1987-05-01) set the tone for censorship with the following guideline:

In so far as practicable, the censorship of correspondence shall be avoided and the privacy of visits shall be maintained, but nothing herein shall be deemed to limit the authority of the Commissioner to direct the institutional head to order censorship of correspondence or supervision of visiting to the extent considered necessary or desirable for the reformation and rehabilitation of the inmates or the security of the institution.

In all levels of prison institutions, one of the most censored areas is publishing and publications ordered or sent to an inmate. The same Administrative Consolidation (1987-05-01) makes reference to reading material censorship: if the material is considered "revoked" or as "affect[ing] adversely the good order or administration of the institution," then it shall not be permitted into an institution. For the most part, reasonable people would agree that these recent guidelines set forth by the Correctional Service of Canada concerning censorship are not unreasonable for a prison.

One can readily see the impact the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has had on prison operations. For example:

COMMISSIONER'S DIRECTIVE, SECTION 764 CENSORSHIP POLICY

Objective

1. To maintain the safety, security, and good order of the institution by restricting inmates' access to certain reading and viewing material and certain other forms of entertainment.

Reading and Viewing Material

2. Inmates shall normally have access to reading and viewing material

which is legally sold in retail outlets in the province in which the institution is located.

Restrictions

3. The director may prohibit entry into the institution of any reading or viewing material which he considers likely to encourage violence or other criminal activity and/or encourage sexual aggressiveness and/or which contains:
 - a) sexually-oriented material involving violence, coercion, compulsion, force, bodily harm, or other similar acts;
 - b) sexually-oriented material involving children;
 - c) other sexually-oriented material which portrays a criminal act;
 - d) material which advocates or promotes genocide or hatred of an identifiable group distinguished by colour, race, religion, ethnic origin, or sex; or
 - e) material that portrays excessive violence and aggression, or prison violence, which could incite inmates to commit similar acts.
4. In addition, any reading or viewing material that contains detailed information on the fabrication of weapons or the commission of criminal acts shall be prohibited.

Live Entertainment

5. Live entertainment shall be permitted, provided that it does not have the potential to adversely affect the safety, security, or good order of the institution.

As reasonable as these guidelines may seem, however, it must be remembered that, while the CSC has its policy, each region may vary its interpretation of that policy. Each institution, in fact, is free to make its own standing orders for the good order of that institution. For instance, the Periodical Review Board of BC publishes weekly reports for all local Federal institutions with the following warning at the bottom of the notice:

- P = Provisional: distribution recommended if pages noted are pulled.
 Y = In the opinion of the Board, the periodical does not violate current community standards.
 N = In the opinion of the Board, the periodical contains material which makes it unfit for distribution.

Our opinion that a periodical is considered fit for distribution does not preclude the Attorney General or police from taking action against that periodical and its distributors.

It must be conceded that in practice the present policy on censorship is liberal when such publications as the following are allowed into prisons: *Oui*, *Swank*, *Playgirl*, *Hustler*, *Honcho*, *Playboy*, *Stag*, and *Adam*. Also approved are *Cinema Blue*, *X-Rated*, *X-Rated Stars in Action*, and *Porn Stars*. And, for the literate, *XXX Adult Letters*, *Private Letters*, *Velvet Love Letters*, and, the simply-named, *Turn-on Letters*.

The regulations start to tighten up, though, when it comes to inmate publishing. Freedom of expression, it seems, is the most sensitive area of censorship within the system. Inmate newspapers are almost always subject to scrutiny prior to publication. The strangest thing about this form of censorship is that often the higher the security rating of the institution, the more free the expression; and, conversely, the lower the security rating, the stricter the censorship. It seems the policy in the higher-security institutions is to allow the inmates the freedom to express themselves on paper as a means of controlling hostilities. On the other hand, a minimum institution, such as Ferndale, has far more censorship of expression and will not allow poetry to be published which contains abusive four-letter words or critical comments towards staff or institutional policies.

Censorship is not exercised solely by the administration, however. One of the most disturbing situations in prison today is what is referred to as the "pecking order." "Solid" inmates look with disgust at the "PCs." Because of this division of prisoners, the problem of acceptability arises in the inmate populations. Because of the associated stigma, some men now do not want to participate in publications such as the **Prison Journal**, prison newspapers, and so on, that include PC material. It becomes an issue of discrimination because the "cool" or "solid" cons of the General Population do not want to be seen as condoning the offences of, or participating in projects with, the Protective Custody prisoners held in institutions like Mountain. General Population prisoners, for instance, threatened to boycott future issues of **Prison Journal** if PC articles were included. The editors, making decisions (as they should) on the quality of the writing submitted, rather than on the basis of prison politics, were forced to deal with the problem up front. Thus censorship became part of a political war between General Population and PC prisoners. Guilt by association is the sticking point; General Population prisoners want a particular image of prisoners presented. And so it goes: one side trying to go after or get even with the other side.

For a long time this conflict seemed like a typical case of the pot calling the kettle black—and to some degree it is. But it goes much deeper than that. The problem really began with the staff, not the inmates. Before the present split between General Population and PC, the division was between the prisoners and the staff; and the inmates made up a community of their own within each prison. In order to break this up, staff adopted the time-honoured policy of divide and

conquer: namely, segregate certain inmates and get the two groups fighting between themselves. This division would take the heat off the guards. The advent of PC status accomplished this. And, since then, in high-security institutions, inmates spend at least as much time dealing with the PC issue as they spend in opposing staff.

An even more insidious form of censorship, however, has to be the type imposed by inmates upon themselves—a type that neither the staff nor the system can do much about: that course of conduct imposed on inmates *by themselves* because of the unwritten rules existing within a hostile environment like a prison. The enforcement of the rules comes in the form of intimidation. For instance, a kind of censorship happens when an inmate starts off to use the phone. The particular guard on duty is one with whom none of his inmate buddies would talk. So he walks away because he will not “crack” [talk] to “the man” to ask for the call. It happens when one inmate refuses to write an article for the newspaper, because it is not approved by his buddies or the population. It also happens when an inmate refuses to go on a temporary absence pass or a work crew because there is another inmate involved who is not acceptable to his group or the population. It is *self-imposed* censorship in its rankest form because these men simply do not want to draw heat (attract attention or risk rejection) by doing anything that is not acceptable to the population or inconsistent with being “solid.”

As we enter prison life, we bring with us our individuality, customs, idiosyncrasies, and rituals, which other inmates may find strange or unacceptable. The first order of business, therefore, is to find the path or course of action that is the least offensive to the greatest number of people. This can be a serious problem. Just *surviving* in the system can be a major undertaking in itself. The rhetoric of GP inmates is simply pure garbage because there are so few truly “solid” people in prison. The raw truth is that if fifteen inmates walked up to any other inmate in any prison and said, “You check into Protective Custody by tomorrow or you’re dead meat,” there are few, if any, who would *not* check in. Anyone in his right mind would be crazy not to do so.

The reality of the situation is that *any one of us* can end up in PC for a variety of reasons, including nothing more than a desire to survive. Yet this “distinction” throws the darkest shadow of censorship over our conduct and productivity in prison. All forms of art and creative literature are censored by this pall. Its pervasive nature affects all of prison life right down to the food men eat, where they sit, and even what bathroom they use and when. It is a type of censorship that has no rules, no boundaries, no compassion.

Charles Maxwell Berg
Ferndale Prison

Of the Fittest

I survive
solely by conforming
to the rules
of those I am
imprisoned with.
Rules that are
harshly enforced.
Deviation from the code
is met with
punishment and
no hope of appeal.
A man's voice
cannot be heard
from a numbered
grave.
I accept this state
outwardly.
Inwardly, I rage
against the injustice.
Yet I dare not
speak out,
for there is
no one to listen.
So I wear
a perpetual mask
and concentrate on
surviving
one more day.

Anonymous
Kent Prison, General Population

Prison Censorship

*The following interviews grew out of criticisms of past issues of the **Prison Journal** by students in the general prison population. These students were opposed to the publication of work by prisoner-students in Protective Custody institutions. This specific conflict between two prisoner-student groups led the Editorial Collective to explore in **Prison Journal No. 8** the broadly defined issue of censorship in prison.*

Lloyd Johnsen interviewed a panel of prisoner-students at each major SFU Prison Education Program campus in British Columbia: Kent Institution General Population (maximum security); Matsqui Institution General Population (medium security); Mountain Institution Protective Custody (medium security); and William Head Institution General Population (low-medium security). Lloyd initially suggests that, in jail, censorship is a fact of life: mail is censored, visits are censored, and so forth. The ensuing discussion focusses on censorship of inmates by prison authorities and examines the issue of prisoners censoring other prisoners.

Glen McDougall

The Kent Interview

Loyd Johnsen: When you think of censorship in your day-to-day existence, what thoughts or images are strongest for you?

Rudy Martens: I think first of the Administration, since we have no rights like a normal citizen. All our thoughts and expressions that we want to put down on paper and send out are screened through the Administration because we don't have any sense of responsibility—at least they don't think we do. So they screen everything.

Loyd: A sense of responsibility ... to do what?

Rudy: To criticize the Administration, criticize anything, you know.

Loyd: So, if you send a letter out that is, in fact, criticizing the Administration, that criticism gets deleted. Is that the idea?

Rudy: Yes.

Loyd: And so they send it back to you?

Rudy: A lot of times they don't. They just don't send it out.

Loyd: You don't know whether it's gone out or not?

Rudy: No. They've even gone so far as opening confidential mail to the Ombudsman, to your lawyer, stuff like that.

Loyd: They can do that?

Rudy: No, but they *do* do that.

Loyd: How do you know?

Rudy: Because people who have tried to send letters to the Ombudsman have been stopped. Letters have never even gotten out. It's happened many times.

And they've also argued blatantly that your lawyer is not a confidential person, so they should be able to censor lawyer mail.

Loyd: What is uncensorable mail? Who can you, according to the law, send mail to uncensored?

Rudy: The Ombudsman, your lawyer, clerks, and [the correctional] investigator, and your Member of Parliament.

Loyd: And that's it?

Rudy: Yes.

Loyd: Yet you are saying that this mail is in fact being censored?

Rudy: Sometimes.

Loyd: Censored in that it doesn't go out?

Rudy: That's right.

Loyd: When they censor it, will you at times get that letter back with the censored parts underlined?

Rudy: That's never happened to me.

Loyd: Has anybody?

Quinn Falk: I understand that that happened in the seventies. They'd cruise over the letters with a big felt-tipped pen. But I don't know. I have never come across that except in the letters that went out explaining the riot. But they went to the papers and were heavily edited and censored.

Loyd: Do you know of anybody who has sent a letter out that in fact didn't arrive?

Rudy: Yes. There's a guy whose name is Rex—something like that. He was in the hole here in 1986 and again last year, and then they sent him to RPC [the Regional Psychiatric Centre] because he was an administrative problem. The reason they were upset with him is that he wound up getting four guards fired from Oakalla while he was waiting trial. Then he came over here, still causing

shit. He's a *natural* shit disturber, a complainer. But he only complains about legitimate things. So, since he's too much of a pain in the ass, they first put him into segregation, and they wouldn't allow any of his mail out. Eventually, they certified him and sent him to RPC.

Loyd: That's certainly censorship. What about prison visits? In terms of censorship, what are the ground rules? I know some visits are screened and some visits are open. What determines that kind of censorship?

Allan Andrew: It's a decision made by a Visits Review Board. They take into consideration the person who is putting in the application—his record and the criteria that the Administration puts on visits. Then they decide whether you are going to have screened visits or open visits.

Loyd: Can you tell in advance whether you are going to have screened or unscreened visits?

Allan: For sure.

Loyd: Are there any other kinds of censorship that come to mind other than visits and the mail?

Rudy: Here's a good example. My parents ... I'm German, right? ... My parents can't write in English; they write in German only. When I first started this bit, the Administration told me to tell my parents that they could only write in English. So that the Administration could censor it. They thought my parents were doing some big devious trip. They're solid Mennonite people who don't have a devious thought in their heads. But the Administration automatically assumes that, since they're the parents of a criminal, they're devious. Right? I told the Administration to hit it. And only after a big argument did it wind up that my parents could write to me in German.

Allan: One time I was having a private family visit and my wife and four-year-old daughter came to the institution. There were a couple of female guards waiting who said that they wanted to conduct a skin frisk of my wife and my daughter. My wife said that she would submit to it, but when they asked my daughter she refused. The guard said, "Well, that's fine. You just won't be able to see your dad this weekend." So, of course, she changed her mind and said that she would. They took them into a room and stripped them both down and made them squat over a mirror. They put my daughter through quite a psychological trip. She's been raised that nobody is to look at her private parts.

Loyd: That brings up my next question. What rationale can you see the Administration having for doing something like that? The first thought that comes to my mind is that it's not beyond some people to use a four-year-old to pack in drugs or something like that. Is that what you see and do you see that as reasonable?

Rudy: Well, like that just comes back to what I said before. We're sub-people, right? So we have no values, no sense of responsibility. That's the way we've been labelled. If I was to put myself in the Administration's shoes, then I would look at the inmates as irresponsible deviants. That we must have an extremely firm hand with them because they're not above doing *anything* completely vulgar or violent. So we have to be just as vulgar and violent to control them. It all comes down to control, right? The end justifies the means.

Loyd: But how do we get around this other situation? Let's say they have this idea of drugs, and packing, and you've got a private family visit.

Quinn: I don't see a four-year-old being strip searched. Just because there might be drugs on the girl doesn't mean they should be strip searching her like they'd strip search anybody else. If the person is older and consents to it, sure. But if they coerce the child by saying, "Well, you won't see your father unless you strip in front of us," that's a lot more deranged than what I see around here. There are some troubled people in here, but they're not like that. That's sick.

Allan: I'm not saying that throughout time there haven't been some convicts that have used their kids to mug drugs into the institution. But in my opinion it is a question of balance and priorities. Even if a four-year-old *was* introducing a small bit of contraband into the institution, it's not worth putting her through that psychological trauma to stop it. It's not worth it.

Loyd: Let's get back to the less inflammatory types of censorship again with the letters and the visits—general visits—whether screened or open. Other than this idea of control and the inmate being irresponsible, what reasons could the Administration have to want to impose censorship?

Allan: They are continuously gathering information. You're monitored here twenty-four hours a day. When you're up at your visits? They're all taped. All your conversations, your phone calls. Your letters are read. It's just a continuous gathering of information for a parole or a gating hearing, or whatever.

Loyd: How do you manage to cope with that kind of constant watching, that constant monitoring?

Allan: Well, it makes it tough on the family relationship because you always have to be aware of what you say. It makes it hard to say your true feelings or even just talk about a certain incident or friends or what's happening with them, because you don't want to say their names or what they're doing.

You have to adapt and, personally, I find that it just draws you deeper within yourself.

Loyd: Does that drawing deeper within yourself have a positive impact eventually or is it purely negative?

Rudy: If I was going to remain a criminal—which I'm not, right?—then it would be positive because this is training me to be extremely devious. My criminal thinking is being amplified because, ironically, by trying to control my whole life, my thinking, everything I say, everything I write, they force me to be devious. It's a vicious circle, right?

Quinn: I don't notice them. I don't edit myself when I'm talking or whatever I'm doing. I notice them. You see them up there in the gym in those little bubbles looking down at you—sweet fucking deal. I'm not a very self-conscious person, eh? I don't sit around thinking, "What does that person think of me?" People that are self-conscious would probably have it pretty bad in here. If you amplify the self-consciousness, then, "Oh no, that camera is watching me. Am I dressed proper? Am I fucking, shaking, sweating?" Those people here that are self-conscious, they want the Administration to get a certain image of them so they can get out. Well, they can read between the lines and my actions and interpret whatever they fucking please.

Loyd: First of all, we've got this vicious circle. They watch, therefore you get devious. You get devious, they watch even more. And you're back and forth and back and forth. And then we've got somebody like Quinn, who says, "Piss on them. Who cares? Let 'em watch." But what does that say for when you get out? On the one hand, here Rudy is saying, "We've got this vicious circle and all it's doing is substantiating this devious pattern and making it more reasonable to operate that way." And then we have Quinn saying, "Well, I don't give a shit." When he gets out there's not a hell of a lot of difference.

Quinn: No, it depends I used to be in minor criminal activity, eh? I'm not going to be in any criminal activity at all, you know. So I shouldn't be too self-conscious because when I get out I won't get caught for doing a bad thing because I ain't going to do that sort of thing.

Allan: Whether you're in an institution or whether you're out on the street—my own personal experience is that I've been a smuggler and a drug trafficker for a good fifteen or twenty years—your phones are monitored, your house is bugged, you're continuously under observation. The surveillance is the same. You should act accordingly and be just as on guard on the street as you are in here.

Loyd: That brings up the question I was leading to. What's going to change when you get out of here in terms of your feeling of being censored?

Allan: The only thing that changes is your frame of mind. You might become a little more lax. In here you take it for granted that you're twenty-four hours a day being observed. On the street you might get a little lax because you think, "Maybe they've got something better to do this day instead of watching me." But it doesn't really change.

Quinn: I could see the watching if you're stealing or doing some other criminal activity, but that's more than what I was in. I was just doing this and that, getting high, just spontaneous things. I didn't really get into any heavy crimes and I'm not going to.

Rudy: Murder isn't a heavy crime?

Quinn: Oh, that was spontaneous. That happened at an acid trip one night, but it's not like I'd planned it.

Loyd: It's curious hearing your reactions to censorship coming from obviously different mind sets and that that mind set is going to continue whether it's on the street or in here

Allan: It's a continuous struggle to break the convict. They're continuously trying to break you

Loyd: Two censorship issues have arisen in the recent past, one here at Kent and one in California. At Kent, the prison censors halted publication of the inmate paper because they didn't like something printed in it. In California, an inmate author, who had been writing and selling his work freely, was censored when he wrote something that displeased the Warden. How do you respond to those in terms of censorship?

Quinn: What happened with that paper?

Allan: Somebody in the Administration didn't like the position the newspaper was taking on a certain issue and so that was it.

Loyd: So it wasn't an option then to *not* write on those issues but write on other issues of interest to the inmates? It was just cancelled? Was there an option?

Allan: There was no negotiating.

Rudy: The Administration doesn't actually sit down and say you can write this. They just say you can't do this. You see, the whole trip is "Can't."

Loyd: Let's get to the point that spawned this idea of talking about censorship. Somebody here or somebody at Matsqui took issue with the idea of having inmates from Mountain or PC included in the **Prison Journal**.

Allan: Personally, I take a very strong position on that issue. Mountain Institution is for sex offenders and stool pigeons and nobody from Kent Institution wants to be seen in the same light as those convicts over there.

Rudy: I have the same views everybody else does about these people. But in order to be an all-around thinking person, which everybody wants to be, you have to realize that they're prisoners and we're prisoners. We are all in the prison system. So to isolate us would be stupid in a way.

Allan: I don't believe that their writings should be censored but just the format should be changed. They should have their own prison journal.

Loyd: So this becomes an editorial policy rather than

Allan: Rather than an issue of censorship.

Rudy: I'd rather they would not be in the **Journal** either, right? But I have to look at the whole picture. And since they are the most publicized criminals—they have more front pages on rapists than on bank robbers—so you can't just shove them under the carpet because they're going to come out somewhere else and then they're going to be even *more* highlighted, right? So at least we've got some control over that in the **Journal**.

Loyd: By designating them as PCs?

Rudy: Yeah, so that they don't go write their own prison journal where they

write all sorts of weird stuff. They should be specifically shown to be PCs, sex offenders. "This is their view. This is their background. They are not part of the criminal underworld; *we* are the criminals. Whether that is bad or good, that's what we are."

Loyd: Different from them.

Rudy: Yes. They are sick people and they have sick views and they don't reflect the views of criminals. But since the public can't differentiate, they're going to classify them as criminals and they're going to take those views that PCs have in a separate journal as *our* views. And, naturally, since sex offenders have more publicity, the public will probably take their views before ours. Right?

Allan: I agree with that totally. It would be real simple to put, "Here's an article by Joe Blow. He's presently serving ten years for bank robbery."

Loyd: You think we should get that explicit?

Allan: Sure. I mean it's all public knowledge anyhow.

Loyd: What about the guys who want to do the writing and they don't want what they're in for publicized? They just want their writing to stand for itself and they don't want to have any kind of rejoinder.

Rudy: If the guy wants to remain anonymous, fine. But as long as at the end it says, "He is in Protective Custody" or "He is a sex offender," etc.

Loyd: That's a point. But one thing that just occurred to me: all institutions tend to label and it just strikes me that that might be a form of labelling.

Quinn: Label them with bright red ink.

Loyd: But label them, that's the main thing? Somehow or other make it clear that they're not part of the General Population?

Rudy: I think that, for the sake of the people on the street, there has to be an introduction or something that says this is who these people *are*. They are opposing camps of prisoners, but society lumped them all in the same camp for convenience, basically the same way as this **Prison Journal** does. We have to lump them together because we can't afford to have two journals. It all comes down to money and convenience, right? So we have to compromise. But I think

it might even turn out to be a benefit instead of a compromise if everybody is, you know, set out. I stand up and I say, "This is who I am. I'm an armed robber." They stand up and say, "I'm a fucking child molester."

Allan: That's right. I would have no qualms if I wrote something in the **Journal** saying, "My name is Allan Andrew. I'm a smuggler, a drug trafficker, a heroin addict, and that's that."

The Matsqui Interview

Loyd Johnsen: Everyone feels the effect of censorship differently. When you think of censorship, what thoughts or images are strongest? What comes to mind most readily?

Erle MacAulay: I see censorship as more of an invasion. You can't write personal thoughts down and have them kept private as a normal person could. You can't write your mother and tell her how you really feel about her because you know some guard will be reading it over and it may end up as a coffee room joke next week. You just don't have any ability to communicate with anybody.

But it's all part of the dehumanization of the prisoners. It's a way of closing you off. Censorship's used as a mechanism to close you off from the world, to isolate you. That's part of their program.

Loyd: Anybody else add to what Erle is saying?

Davey Maurice: I think about censorship in terms of visits and incoming mail. A perfect example of this: when Erle stated that they tape the conversations. You have no sense of privacy.

Just a couple of months back in the middle of my visit, a lady approached me in the visiting area and called me into the back with my visitor and put a tape on the table and told us that our conversation was too smutty. There was too much—well, that I was suggesting certain things and she said that she didn't want to go on listening to this. That's just a perfect example of what Erle is saying. It didn't really affect me as much as it affected my visitor. Yet these people are saying you should maintain your social contacts. If you can't speak to people about the way you feel at certain times, there's no way you maintain your contact and sooner or later it's going to slip away.

Loyd: So it has an eroding effect on your personal relationships?

Davey: Sure it does. And on your character.

Loyd: Darrell?

Darrell Bates: Davey said pretty well what censorship is—a mechanism of control. It's an invasion. That's what I really see it as: your thoughts, what you

see, anything. They let you see what they want you to see and write whatever they want you to write. What they don't like is eliminated. Phone calls, too; you're scared to say things on the phone because you know they can use it as ammo against you in the future somewhere.

Erle: You're even afraid just to contact people. You have to send a visiting form out to somebody. On it they say they're going to check your record. "We're going to We'll take We have the right to stick our fingers up your son's ass if you bring him in." And you have to agree with all of this. I mean *that's* censorship right there.

Who the fuck is going to want to come into a prison and subject themselves to cavity searches, strip searches? I mean, that's a mechanism of censorship right there.

Davey: Some people will say we have to maintain security at the Institution, right? Well, in a certain regard, there is a little bit of concern that they should put into supporting that. But you know they've done some pretty outrageous things.

Erle: It's abused. It's a tool they use to make sure the Institution is secure. The end justifies the means. That's basically what *we're* here for. The ends of what we did justified the means. So what are we learning from this? These guys do things that I would never even consider doing to somebody—playing with their heads to an obscene extent. And as long as they have that one "end"—security in the Institution—I mean, well

My father won't come out here and visit me. I sent him a visiting form and now I rarely even hear from him anymore. I don't know what's in his head. But they've effectively censored him from my life. A visitor looks at the form and says, "No offence, but no thanks. Pass."

Loyd: Other than the obvious examples, how do you think it is going to be different when you're out of jail?

Davey: I think in the last few years, censorship has picked up when we're released from these places. When men walk out of these gates, they have so many restrictions placed on them—you know, urinalysis, reporting to your parole officer twice, three times a week, stuff like this.

Darrell: Getting into liquor

Davey: Yeah. And who you're hanging around with—*that's* censorship, I think. And living in the environment that we do, we kind of just ... we breathe it.

Loyd: So how do you go about either coping with the censorship or getting around the censorship?

Davey: Individual.

Loyd: You maintain your individuality?

Davey: No. It's up to each individual to do whatever is necessary to cope with it.

Loyd: What kinds of things do you do to cope with it? Now obviously I'm not asking you to tell me how to skirt the rules, but how to live within the system. You're surviving.

Erle: Well, you don't keep notes, you don't write letters, you don't make phone calls, you don't visit people, you don't talk anywhere there's a microphone or a loudspeaker.

When you say anything, you say it in a language.

Davey: You talk in shit.

Erle: In a language that could mean a hundred different things. Only the person you're talking to knows what you're saying.

Darrell: Defence mechanism.

Erle: Essentially, you become very introverted.

It desocializes you because you don't want to talk to people anymore. And, if you do talk to them, you don't talk to them about real things or personal things or intimate things.

Darrell: Or else you can work around this censorship mechanism. You can go someplace you think there are no bugs if you have something to say.

Erle: They have parabolic mikes and they run around outside of the yard and in the towers. We had a meeting outside in the yard once. They had a guy in the tower with a parabolic mike and another guy with a camera, a video camera, taping it all, taping this general meeting we had in the yard. Now, I mean

When you've lived in this environment, and then you walk out, it's like going to another country. A lot of guys I know, myself included, leave prison, go out on the street with a whole bunch of ideas of "I'm going to do this, I'm going to

do that.” But nothing works, nothing’s valid anymore. All the thoughts you had, the way of thinking is different. The speed of it is weird.

After long bits of being in the prison, I can’t go to a Catholic charity and sit down with six people that I don’t know and rap away, and be myself. I can do that for show but I can’t be really personable there because I am wondering, “Who’s this guy?” and “Who’s he?” and “I don’t know that guy.”

Davey: No social skills.

Erle: Generally, in prison you don’t talk to somebody unless you’ve seen him around for a year and he’s got a four- or five-year good rep, and this attitude carries out onto the street. You don’t trust people. That’s how it is. That’s how censorship affects you in here—it desocializes you.

Davey: You see, when we’re here we like to keep to ourselves. Like Erle says, you just don’t come along and say “Hello” to everybody in here. You kind of censor who you talk to. When you get out, that’s all changed. People out there like to be friendly—at least to say “Hello” and things like that. But if I see somebody in here saying “Hello” to me, right away I start questioning. Right?

Erle: Yeah. “What’s he want? What’s he doing? Who’s he?”

Davey: It could be somebody from the University who is supposed to run the program for the University and that person says “Hello.” And you know you can’t open up to that person. It is difficult at first to say, “Oh, yeah. How do ya do? Name’s so and so.”

Loyd: So the wall goes up.

Davey: Yeah. And right away they think there’s something wrong with you.

Loyd: So far we have been looking at the negative implications of censorship. Now, it strikes me and it’s occurred to a lot of people that censorship must have some redeeming qualities. Censorship has been used for altruistic reasons: to save children, to do things that we would normally perceive to be valid and to a good end. But what I’m wondering now is: what arguments can you imagine the Administration coming up with to justify censorship? You be the Administration.

Darrell: The argument they use is that, without censorship, they wouldn’t be able to stop violence and all that it promotes. You know: anything we see or read

promotes antisocial behaviour. That goes for anything that they censor in here. Same argument.

Loyd: But just assume that you are the Administration now—I know this is difficult. Society has said, “These people are in jail and it’s your job to keep them in jail.” What censorship would you see as being legitimate?

Erle: What are you trying to ask? What level is acceptable?

Loyd: Yeah.

Erle: To make this work?

Loyd: Not necessarily. I’m just suggesting the situation does exist. This is a real place and there is an administration and they are making rules. The Administration does not have the ability to open the gates and say, “Now everybody go home.” Theirs is purely a custodial position. So, as the Administration, what censorship would you see as reasonable?

One suggestion is that if we assume that things like drugs are not good things to have, then we would say, “All right, we are going to censor your mail, or at least read your mail, to make sure you’re not making some sort of a drug deal.” Or, more to the point, making sure that you’re not setting up an escape plan.

Darrell: A safeguard of some sort?

Loyd: A safeguard of some sort. To my mind, if you are indeed in a custodial position, and therefore the person can’t escape, then it seems reasonable to have some sort of censorship to forestall any escape.

Erle: What levels are justified?

Loyd: What levels *are* justified?

Davey: Well, in their view or in our own view?

Loyd: I would say you could take the neutral, the moral position, here.

Darrell: The public probably would like to see censorship as a safeguard for prevention of escapes. That justifies them listening to our phone calls or reading our mail. Drugs, too, because they probably figure drugs are promoting this antisocial behaviour or causing whatever problems they figure that we have.

And the only way they're going to stop these problems is by cutting off the drugs. That justifies them censoring all this stuff.

Erle: So long as you have this prison system as an end, they can justify all of the mechanisms they use for control. They have to do this because the system exists. We have to stop the drugs so we have to search the visitors. That makes sense. But you are not the visitors who are having another person view their body making them squat over a mirror, bending over so they can look up your ass. These are things that people feel queasy about doing in front of their doctor, never mind

You're scum because you're visiting scum. People don't like to go through that kind of a thing. You can justify doing whatever you want to prisoners. I have an argument with that. But what about the visitors? What about the people who have committed no crimes?

Loyd: OK. Two censorship issues have arisen in the recent past, one at Kent and one in California. At Kent, the prison censors halted publication of the inmate paper because they didn't like something that was printed in it. In California, an inmate author who had been writing and selling his work freely with everybody's knowledge was censored when he wrote something that displeased the Warden. What's your response to either of those cases?

Davey: We've got that happening in here.

Loyd: Is that right?

Davey: Oh, yeah. Over the newspapers.

Darrell: Yeah. Right now as a matter of fact. A poem.

Davey: There was a poem written. All of a sudden, memos are flying around.

Erle: That's typical. These people have the controls. They're given the controls by society and they're told by society, "Use them as you see fit." And the Warden uses them as he sees fit. Unfortunately, sometimes—and I would say more often than not—they use those mechanisms for their own ends rather than the ends of society. They say, "I don't like that article because it offends me." It has nothing to do with society. Or, "I don't like that justice initiative, so I'm going to try and interfere with them as much as I can." Or, "I don't like the Prisoners' Committee, so I'm going to use harassment techniques against all the committee members to let them know who's boss."

These are tools that they're given by society to use to reach a specific end which they can't, by the very nature of the prison. But because they have that position and because they have that power, they use it to meet their own ends and most people in power do the same thing.

Loyd: Last question. Last year the general inmate population both here and at Kent thought that the PC inmates and the inmates at Mountain ought to be excluded or at least their writing ought to be excluded from the **Prison Journal**.

Erle: Hear, hear!

Loyd: What would you say to those who opted for censorship in and from the **Journal**?

Darrell: I'd say, "Right on!"

Davey: If you want a good quality newspaper, you better eliminate it.

Darrell: They're not part of us anyways. They work with the man. Half of them are in there because they work with the man ratting us out. The other half are skinnners and they give us a bad name. They don't have the same views as us. As a matter of fact, they're bitter against Population inmates. You can hear them outside in the yard yelling up at the hole, at Population inmates.

They view prison life with a different outlook than we do.

Erle: Prisoners generally consider anybody who's checked into Protective Custody—into a different part of the Institution, or a different Protective Custody Institution—as not being prisoners anymore. And the **Prison Journal** represents prisoners.

Loyd: Well, what about one suggestion that I got from Kent? In that Protective Custody inmates are by definition prisoners. Not by your definition, but by the general definition: they can't walk out either. And, if they are going to be in the **Prison Journal**, that their association with the PC group should be acknowledged.

Erle: No. A lot of guys have refused to submit anything further to the **Journal**, on the grounds that it might as well be the *Sun* newspaper for the type of people that they're putting there. They're not prisoners. It would be like having the Solicitor General and everybody else writing articles. Well, find your own medium. This is the prisoners' journal.

I know prisoners, including myself, that refuse to submit anything further to the **Prison Journal**, or even acknowledge that it exists. It's not a prisoners' journal, or a prison journal; it's some bastardized form of it.

Davey: I agree with what he says.

Loyd: Darrell?

Darrell: Yeah.

Loyd: General agreement. Thank you, gentlemen.

The Mountain Interview

Loyd Johnsen: Censorship is a fact of life in jail: mail is censored, visits are censored. When you think of censorship, what are the strongest thoughts or images?

Mike Munday: Because I'm Assistant Editor of the inmate newspaper, I think of the Administration, which will absolutely not allow any criticism, no matter what the department, or how badly it's run. They will allow absolutely no criticisms whatsoever. I've tried three times to get something in the institution newspaper criticizing the Psychology Department because they don't have registered psychologists. And every time the whole article has been ripped right out. They just won't allow you to criticize; it doesn't matter how valid the criticism is.

Loyd: When you put together a paper you have to send it for clearance. Right?

Mike: Everything goes up top. Then it goes through two or three steps and each person has his or her say and you get back the watered-down version. Consequently, we end up with a very fluffy sort of institutional newspaper.

Loyd: What about criticisms among other inmates—I mean, if you're going to criticize some program that some other inmate is running?

Mike: You censor yourself, because everybody wants to get out and you would rather not criticize another program that is being run for the inmates' benefit that will ultimately show some results. We tend to stay away from that.

Loyd: So you can't write anything at all about what they are doing?

Mike: Yes. Nine times out of ten it's censored. Sometimes you can sneak something in. I just edited a letter by Steve Duguid and I managed to slip in a couple of words that weren't in there in the first place and I hope Steve is not going to pillory me for it. It was on education and I managed to get in a word about the slave program at Matsqui where Steve had said the industrial program or something like that. I found in the past that if you start talking about education, after the first paragraph, they lose interest. It seems innocuous at the start, so they lose interest and I get one or two points in.

Loyd: Graham, what comes to mind?

Graham Cook: Well, personally, I never worried about censorship. I say whatever I have to say, right up to the Warden, and take the lumps that go with it. But I'm on the Inmate Grievance Committee and there has been something come up regularly. This is the only institution where adult magazines are not allowed in for the inmates because of the higher population of sex offenders. Some medieval, moralistic idiot up on top has decided that something like letting a copy of *Playboy* in would I don't know what We'd have a rampage of rapes running through the huts or masturbation to the point where the walls are sticky or whatever their thinking is. They don't allow these magazines in. I can see it, for instance, at a place like RPC where the whole institution is a therapeutic milieu and they can say that *therapeutically* it is not good to allow this in. But in an institution where the amount of therapy that is provided is so minimal ... it's ridiculous; it's almost reverse therapy. It's a bizarre form of censorship.

Loyd: Is there any written justification for that stance?

Graham: No. The written justification is that the Warden said, "No." The Administration said, "No." The Deputy Commissioner said, "Not at this Institution." They seem to feel that they can decide on the morals of everybody in this camp and they interfere beyond the realms of their caretaking role. Our punishment is to lose our liberty. We're here and that's it. But they start to interfere in all other aspects of our life and psyche and that is a form of censorship.

Loyd: Absolutely. Joseph?

Joseph: Well, I see the other side of censorship. Actually, what really affects most of us is that the public in general doesn't really know what's going on in here. They don't see the way we're treated. They don't see what is really going on in here. For instance, not this past Christmas, but the one before, I was in the big Oakalla riot. I saw, for months after, articles in the newspapers about what had happened. I was interviewed and asked what really happened.

I knew at that point, but I still had a few months to spend in Oakalla and that prevented me from saying anything. Because, any time you're stuck in a situation like this, the inmate is held hostage by the guards: they can do whatever they want with you. They play head games; they set you up for other people. Graham was set up. They allow inmates to beat you up till they feel that you got enough and then they'll intervene and nobody will ever get punished for those actions because they feel that it's right.

Loyd: So what kind of censorship are we talking about here? Not being able to freely write to public journals or public newspapers?

Joseph: We're supposed to be able to contact anybody.

Graham: Anybody.

Joseph: Anybody. But just try, for instance, to have a phone call to the newspaper to tell them what's going on. After the Oakalla riot two Christmasses ago, the newspaper wanted to come in to interview people, but the Administration handpicked certain inmates that they wanted to talk to the newspaper because they knew that those guys would tell the story the Administration wanted them to tell.

Graham: It is a very strict form of censorship—the fear of stating anything that will rock the boat or upset it—because there are so many ways they can get at you. At Oakalla, for instance, I was sent into General Population and I'm a child molester. I was beaten up twice before I was finally moved to PC even though I had requested PC.

This was just a little game that the guards played. It's sort of a lesson. And you get it here, for instance, if you upset the Administration. They won't physically hurt you, but they've got things like administrative segregation: you get put in the hole for your own safety. All they have to do is say that there is a rumour that somebody is going to hurt you and you can be put in the hole or transferred to Kent for your own safety. There's dozens of ways that they can legally nail you and everybody is aware of this. So if you open your mouth a lot and you rock the boat a lot, you are taking a big chance.

Joseph: I'll give you just a very, very tiny example: when I first got here, I wrote my mom and I asked her to send me some clothes and shit like that. Included in the package I received were underwear. I realize that this is the Bible belt and they're probably not used to seeing bikini underwear, but there were six pairs in the package and A & D refused to allow me to have my own underwear. One of the reasons I wanted to have my own underwear is here they provide only three new pairs of underwear for a year.

Graham: Guaranteed to fall apart in six months.

Joseph: Only three. And they say, if you need more, we can give you used ones. I'm sorry. I retain a little bit of dignity and I ain't going to wear somebody else's old underwear. So I grieved it, and after the first level of grievance they told me,

“That’s it. There’s no way you can have your underwear so forget about it.” So I let that thing go.

Around the same time I put a request in to have an institutional TV; there was one available. Six months after I checked to see where I was on that list and found out that my request for an institutional TV had disappeared. Funny enough, the guy who denied me my underwear is the same guy who handles those requests, and there’s nothing I can do about it. Now I’ve got to wait an extra year to have a TV.

Graham: It’s a fear thing. Everybody operates out of an “If you open your mouth, you’re going to lose a pass. You’re going to lose a privilege. You’re going to have something happen to you.”

Joseph: That’s right.

Graham: You’ve got this censorship of fear over you all the time. And some guys can handle it and some guys can’t.

Loyd: What do you think is going to change, with respect to censorship, when you get out? What do you think is going to stay the same?

Graham: As long as I’m on mandatory [supervision], I’m still in the same situation. It’s just that the people who are controlling me are different people, but it’s still part of the system.

Loyd: Say, once you’re finished parole? When everything’s behind you.

Graham: At warrant expiry, then the only thing I’ve got to watch for is the police. Particularly people with my charges. You get pulled into police lineups any time there’s an incident in the community where there’s no identification of a perpetrator. Bango! They call on a whole mess of people and they tend to do it very publicly. They’ll come to your place of work and haul you in and that sort of thing.

So there’s this constant awareness. You don’t rock the boat; you start to live like a mouse. Or you fight back and you say, “Fuck it, I don’t care. You do what you want; I’m not going to take this.” But you’ve got to make your choices. There’s an implied censorship of your being allowed to live your life as you want.

Loyd: Getting back to what Mike was saying: if, when you are out, you got into a journalistic position and criticized the system, would they still have this

Mike: You still have this cloud over you. There are ways to get around that—using a *nom de plume* and things like that. Anybody that's been through the process should be able to put together a very concise report that leaves nothing to chance. Edit it, edit it, edit it, until you get something that can't be tossed aside as garbage, and then try to get it published in the newspapers. That would be a way around it.

Graham: Yeah. It's a power thing. If you are going to fight the system you have got to fight it so loudly and so publicly that they can't touch you.

Mike: Yeah, right.

Loyd: Given that censorship is a fact of life, is there, in your mind, any rationale for censorship?

Graham: Yes.

Joseph: In our position?

Loyd: In any position.

Graham: I think censorship is something that is a personal matter for any adult and a parental matter if you are censoring things for your kids. If I choose to read pornography every Friday night in the privacy of my own home, I don't think anybody has the right to tell me I can't. If I want to put up a billboard of a couple fucking, then I think society can have a say in that because it's out in the public and therefore does affect the public. But I do feel censorship is a personal choice thing, except that I think parents have the right to censor things for their kids until they're old enough to make those choices for themselves. I don't think that anybody should have the right to tell someone else how to live their life as long as the way they live their life is not interfering with the general well-being of everybody else.

Loyd: In that case, try to put yourself in the position of the Administration of this jail. What justification would you come up with for censorship—for the censorship that's here now—the censorship of mail, the censorship of criticisms of the system.

Graham: Well, their justification is that it's for the welfare of the inmates. That's their justification.

Loyd: What would be your justification?

Graham: If I was Administration?

Loyd: Yeah—if you were in the Administrator's position.

Graham: In this prison?

Loyd: In this prison, with the censorship that's in place here, and you had to justify it.

Joseph: Well, it's simple.

Graham: I couldn't.

Joseph: No, it's simple. One of the reasons they would open your mail and censor is because they are afraid that you are making plans either to escape or to have drugs.

Loyd: That sounds legitimate to me.

Joseph: Well, for just this particular item. We can't deny them the right to read the letters, because certain inmates might try to have drugs brought in or certain inmates might make plans with people on the outside to try to escape. The other thing is communication between inmates about other inmates—people on the outside. "Wait for that guy when he gets out. I want a bullet in his head." That sort of thing. But these, I'm convinced, would be the main arguments.

Loyd: Let's go then to the next kind of censorship here that Mike was talking about. How would you, as the Administrator, justify censoring critical comments about the Psychology Department, for instance?

Mike: I couldn't. If you're seeing a psychologist, he should be a psychologist and not somebody that's just got a B.A. or something like that. I mean, the psychiatrists have got to go through fifteen years or something like that. These guys do it in two and they make decisions that affect the lives of people for ten, twenty years down the road, and I can't think of any reason why we can't criticize

Graham: The words are not going to hurt. Why shouldn't people bitch about it? Even if the Administration will not make any changes in Psychology, and they won't, let the inmates bitch if they want.

Mike: Yeah. Before I knew this interview was taking place this week, I started on an article on censorship and criticism. What I'm saying is that criticism should be encouraged, censorship should be discouraged. Because if you encourage criticism, it forces these people to look at both sides of the question and come up with a logical answer, not just *an* answer but the *reasons* for the answer.

Loyd: It just occurred to me that if you were an administrator and if you were encouraging criticism, then wouldn't that necessarily open a Pandora's box? If you had everybody criticizing, they would be spending their entire time answering criticisms.

Graham: But you don't have to answer it. They won't let us *express* it. There is no onus on them to answer it.

Loyd: But that is what Mike said.

Mike: Yes. They would answer it in a logical manner.

Graham: Oh yeah, it would be nice if they would. But we're not even allowed to express it, let alone answer it.

Mike: Initially, it would open a Pandora's box, but there's only so many things wrong with the Institution. I mean you just can't say there's everything wrong with it. There's certain things wrong with the Institution that need to be changed and, once those changes were made or at least the inaction explained, then the criticism rate would die off until you got to a point where things seemed legitimate.

Graham: They should have an inmates' relations officer—like a public relations officer—somebody who does nothing but just deal with complaints or criticisms and explain what the real reasons are or what the real policy is. But in order to get anybody to talk to you, you've gotta go through the grievance process and you get sloughed off and sloughed off and sloughed off—bullshit answers. And they seem to feel that if they tell anyone the truth, the world will fall in.

Mike: That's the attitude in a nutshell. Yeah. There's so many jobs on the line, there's so many people dependent on inmates for their livelihood, for their family's livelihood, they're not about to let you criticize too much.

Loyd: How do you deal with this? How do you go about getting around this very obvious censorship, other than making a really loud noise or, as Mike was saying, putting in little barbs hidden in the third paragraph?

Graham: I bury them in paper work. There are channels set up, and almost every week I'm turning out something in terms of grievances or complaints. I've written to the Solicitor General of Canada several times and had inquiries come down. And I just keep it going. Every once in a while, if I'm stuck, I get my lawyer to send a letter out on it and, literally, keep it bubbling that way.

I've got some results from doing that and they hate it, they absolutely hate it. You're allowed to communicate with Ottawa but they hate it when you do. They get very upset when you get a call from the Solicitor General's Office down here. It's like a fox in a hen house. They run around going, "Gluck, gluck, gluck." They just can't handle it. And that's one way of doing it—going through the channels that are legitimately set up. You can go in and pound on somebody's desk and they can ignore you. But if you get their superior to make an inquiry, they get very upset.

Mike: There's no real way to address it effectively.

Loyd: I wasn't thinking so much of addressing it. I was thinking more of circumventing it, or subverting it. No, that's what you're doing.

Graham: Yeah, right. I'm only one person. If everybody was doing what I was doing, they'd go absolutely insane.

Mike: Well, the system would break down and clog up

Loyd: Last year some General Population inmates at Matsqui and Kent thought that PC inmates and inmates at Mountain ought to be excluded or at least their writing ought to be excluded from the **Prison Journal**. Now what would you say to those who opted for censorship in and from the **Journal**?

Graham: Did they say why?

Loyd: I think the general consensus was that, by having their name beside somebody else who's obviously in Protective Custody or from Mountain, that would somehow lump them together.

Graham: Yeah, they'd be put in with the rats, diddlers, and skimmers. Afraid it would rub off on them. Well, personally, I would rather not have my name

attached to General Population. These guys have really done a lot of damage over their lives. We have done damage, yes. But you've got guys there that have spent twenty years of their life destroying whatever they could get their hands on, including human lives, and they look upon themselves as better than people who have committed one or two sex offences.

It's more of a type of thing where we should look at it as an equality thing. We're all criminals. We've all done a criminal act and therefore we're equal. But if we're going to be doing comparisons, we want to look at it more carefully. As a rule—there are exceptions of course—but the majority of the General Population—I certainly wouldn't want my sister to marry one.

Joseph: I wouldn't go that far. First, it's unfair for them to say so, because we live under the same people as they do—probably in different security arrangements than they do, but there are also minimum and medium in Population. I don't particularly think they are worse than other people, but I don't like their con code that they push through, by which they would kill somebody or shank them for a couple of pills or a bill that wasn't paid when it was due. They have very little appreciation of what life is all about and in a lot of cases they don't have respect for other human beings the way probably the people in Protective Custody have. We live in a much more humanized group here. We don't live as much in fear as they do there, where you have to answer to the king shit of the tier, otherwise you can get shanked. I just don't buy that.

Mike: I don't have thoughts either way. I've known some people from Population—the ones that I've met that have been in Population and are now in here—they seem quite rational people and I would say it's just a minority.

Graham: Don't forget the General Population would not come here under any circumstances.

Mike: Well, that's

Graham: Exceptions do

Mike: That's not the cons themselves; that's a managerial decision—divide and conquer. They set this idea up that these people are *different* and they can use it as a threat. If they don't shape up, they're back to Kent—"We'll ship you into Population"—that sort of thing. It's one of the things you have to live with and avoid if you possibly can. But I've got no objection to being lumped in the same category and I'm sure a lot of those people over there just want to get on with their time and get out too.

Loyd: So as far as dealing with the **Journal** Obviously Mike would say just keep it going the way it's going—no designation and no distinction.

Graham: I would say the same thing. But if they want to put it into a sort of a class system, who the hell are they to say that we can't write and be involved in the **Journal**? It works both ways. The way things are going now PCs are going to be outnumbering the Population pretty soon and, when that comes about, maybe the worm is going to turn, and they'll find that the Population people are being treated like the lower-class citizens they seem to consider we are.

Joseph: Yeah. There's that frame of violence that surrounds the Population that is not present to the same degree in Protective Custody. That's where I disagree with the people in Population. I think we've retained some of that human dignity that they have lost because they're "solid" cons.

Mike: Well, the second thought about it is that most of those people are from back East and they're all probably skimmers as well. There are a lot of skimmers hiding out from back East.

Graham: Yes, they've gotten into the background, and that's why they're so vocal, too. Methinks he doth protest too much. They've got things in their backgrounds that they don't want to talk about. I've watched a lot of educational TV and, to me, General Population is sort of like baboons. I mean, its pecking order: the fighting, the turning around; they react like animals. An individual that can be moved from that might become a human. When they are in a group, they act very strangely. A lot of the stuff that happens doesn't make any sense.

Joseph: And if we could be very, very discreet and do a secret survey among the population

Mike: What? To find out how many skimmers there are?

Joseph: No, no! Most of them *know* what kind of living conditions we got here and, if we could make a secret survey, how many of those from Population would rather be here than live in that hellhole where they are kept right now?

Graham: Toilet. That's a better word.

Joseph: Yeah. It's a toilet over there.

Mike: I've never been there, so I'll take your word for it.

The William Head Interview

Bruce Godfrey: Particularly nowadays, censorship is about drugs. All drugs seem to be lumped together as the causes of all the socioeconomic evils in Canada and the US. And that just strikes me as being overdone in some respects. There are other things we could concentrate on, right? And there is also the issue of censorship in many bookstores, the most extreme case being where Canada knuckled under to the Ayatollah Khomeini because he didn't want Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* published. By calling it "hate literature," Canada wimped out.

Loyd Johnsen: But in terms of jail? What is censorship in the Institution?

Carlos: A very important thing for us is correspondence, letters from our relatives, which we know have been censored. And even more important would be phone calls. These are not supposed to be censored but they are. We know they tape every single phone call going out of here so we are not free to say what we want. That's censorship.

Loyd: When you send a letter out, how do you know it's been censored?

Carlos: We know it takes a letter five to seven days to be delivered, but here it sometimes takes two months and that happens regularly. But more important is the phone call, especially when you talk to your lawyer. Those they are not supposed to hear at all.

Loyd: I was under the impression that calls to your lawyer or Member of Parliament weren't supposed to be monitored. How do you know they are?

Carlos: I know they are. I know 100 percent they are.

Loyd: You've had information come back to you?

Carlos: Yeah.

Loyd: So, Glenn, what comes to mind concerning censorship?

Glenn Ryznar: It's an experience that I've felt pretty closely ever since I began my sentence. I found that, if I wasn't into the norm of things (and that includes

everything from artistic experiences to religious experiences), I had problems. It is very difficult to be a vegetarian, for instance, because that doesn't fit into the mainstream of things. It is very difficult to follow the Hindu religion rather than Catholic or Protestant—religions that have ministers available.

In many ways, the things that I wanted, such as items of worship, were censored. Some individual looks down and says, "You can't do this, you can't do that, etc., etc. We don't have programs to support that. We have to have so many people before we can support that." And so on. This is a sort of censorship put under the guise of programming, but it's not true. What I feel most acutely is censorship as an artist. And this doesn't only come from the Administration; it also comes from people inside prison doing time who have their own norms, their own values that they expect you to fall in line with.

Loyd: Other prisoners?

Glenn: Sure, why not? They're not free from that. Everybody has his biases and prejudices and he expects other people to be the same. What tends to be, I think, the most common element in censorship is fear. What essentially happens is that censorship becomes an easy answer for what we fear. And rather than looking for answers and working things out, we make up rules and regulations as a way of dealing with our problems. And, since we can never determine what is good and what isn't good, we tend to draw an imaginary line.

Loyd: That's a good point and it leads me to my next question. Censorship is obviously seen as a positive thing by a lot of people for a lot of reasons. I think we can all agree that censorship is a good thing when it's used to save small children from getting hurt. So imagine yourself in the position of the Administration here whose duty it is to keep people who are *sent* to jail *in* jail. There is, therefore, going to be some censorship of mail, of phone calls, of visits, and so on, because you don't want people making escape plans or bringing in drugs or making threatening phone calls. Other than these obvious examples, what justifications can you come up with for censorship here?

Carlos: It doesn't matter if we're in jail by force or working on the other side. We're in the same environment. And it's a sick environment. And we're both here for a number of years—some for most of their lives. But the question is: *when do the regulations or mandate stop and the abuses start?* They have to keep us in jail, of course. You cannot bring guns in jail or bombs. So, of course, there has to be censorship. You cannot phone someone and say, "Listen, tomorrow I'm going to kill you." But this is what they use as an excuse for their exercise of power—for abuse.

Loyd: Let's take it one step further then. Let's say we all agree generally that bringing in bombs or making threatening phone calls are legitimate areas for censorship. But what about when they do the other things that you generally grumble about—that anybody would grumble about? How would you go about justifying that on a rational basis?

Glenn: They have a lot of reasons these days. Ever since the social sciences became part of the CSC, they got all kinds of things they can bring out. This is the case especially in the realm of personality—personality modification and behavioural control. If they can't get physical, tangible evidence for censorship, they then turn to psychoanalytical arguments about personality disorders and deviance and so on. What I'm getting at is the flexibility they have *because of* the social sciences. Social science has supplied them with labels for deviance and they'll use them as much as they can.

Loyd: Good point.

Bruce: Yeah. But where do you draw the line? There's a very pat charge they have: "the good order of the institution." I was censored, put away for seven days, "for the good order of the institution." What was my deviance, my offence? Having two throat lozenges, two aspirins, and an antihistamine pill. That cost me seven days in a room half this size.

To me, that is the ultimate in Fascist dictatorship when they can throw somebody in jail for something as trivial as that. They can justify that a hundred ways but it is abuse of authority and censorship.

Loyd: How do you go about dealing with this kind of censorship? Obviously you are all successful in terms of your survival and you all seem to be psychologically sound.

Carlos: One of the ways you can deal with it is you can lose your hair like me It's a good question and, for me, it's *never lose your temper*—because that's what they want you to do. If you lose your temper they say, "Aha, you're a bloody animal." And they put you in the hole.

Loyd: How do you go about stopping yourself from losing your temper?

Carlos: Count to ten, sometimes twenty. Then I start all over again and try to explain again what I want.

Bruce: And, theoretically, the level of censorship is supposed to go down as you

cascade down from a maximum system. But the way it actually works is that they censor you more now that you're here. There is no way they're going to throw you in the hole in Kent, for instance, for having a couple of aspirins. They're worried about big-league problems like knives two feet long, ounces of heroin, and rolls of ten-dollar bills that equal \$20,000 or more. Here, in a lot of cases, you're censored or subject to punitive dissociation for little things.

Loyd: Punitive dissociation?

Bruce: You're put in the hole.

Loyd: Sounds like Glenn's social science theory of the CSC.

Bruce: Yeah. You find yourself physically censored from people around you for no other reason than what seems to be pure power-flexing. There seems to be a lot of petty resentment. Like a letter you get from a girlfriend—in a lot of institutions you get it, but here they might make you send it back and say, "Well, she's not on your visitor list; therefore, you can't receive her letter."

Loyd: So, how do you go about getting around that?

Bruce: That was just a hypothetical situation. I don't have any blonde, beautiful girlfriend madly trying to get in touch with me at the moment.

Loyd: Maybe it can be arranged.

Bruce: The way I get around it is I do what Carlos does: I count to ten usually, though it depends on my mood. I may have a high tolerance today but another day I may be tired, fatigued. If somebody says something I don't want to hear, most days I just grumble and leave. But if it's a day that I'm in a particularly bad mood, I'll tell the guy to fuck right off.

Carlos: You know what the best answer is to coping with this? You have to fight back. I had a problem with phone calls to my lawyer that lasted *seven* months. They wouldn't let me call him during the day when he was in his office and whenever I needed to. They kept telling me to put in requests. So I said, "You want requests, you'll get requests." They just wanted to play this game so I decided to drive them crazy. Morning and afternoon, morning and afternoon, I kept the requests coming to bury them in paperwork. So then they say I'm a rebel but still they do nothing. Then I go over them. I go to the Warden and, if the Warden doesn't do anything, I go to the Pacific Region's Headquarters. And then

I keep going to Ottawa and so on. Eventually, phone calls start coming from Ottawa. The guys here don't like those kind of calls.

Finally, they tell me I can make my calls whenever I need to. But now they make trouble for me over other requests. One step forward and another back.

Loyd: Glenn, how do you deal with this kind of censorship?

Glenn: I wish I had a simple answer.

Loyd: Well, give us a complicated answer.

Glenn: I suppose it really is simple in a sense. I really believe in the social construction of reality, and I believe that if you make yourself a part of that, then that's what you get. I don't adhere to mass values, I watch what I desire to make sure that I'm as independent as possible, and I find that I maintain my individuality and self-reliance. I just don't go near the flame; I don't give them a chance to burn me.

I believe that the whole system is built into a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy type of thing. Certain segments are set up and are orchestrated to come down in a certain pattern. It's a perpetual tragedy, that people build up in a socially constructed way. Like, you play that role and I play this role, and *bang!* we'll have a conflict. And we just keep doing this because that's our version of reality.

Loyd: It's Carlos' sick institution, sick environment?

Glenn: Yes, but it happens on the outside as well.

Loyd: Right. Which brings up another question. How do you think this kind of situation is going to change for you, individually, once you're out?

Carlos: In which way?

Loyd: In terms of censorship. In terms of "The Man" being above you and ordering you to do things.

Carlos: I have never been in jail before so it is very difficult to answer that question because I'm not out yet. I believe that if you keep yourself together without losing your temper and keep your principles the same as before. Of course, *you* won't be a hundred percent the same—you'll be more angry in a way. It will be much the same. When I get out, for example, I'll have my children and I will tell them, "No smoking here" and "Don't raise your voice to your

mother." I'll try to pick out the few positive things in here; I'll try to forget the ninety-five percent that is wrong and go on.

Everywhere it happens the same way. If you are working for a big company and there is an asshole who pretends to know everything and tells you, "Do this, do that"—you have to fight in the same way and complain.

Loyd: You've learned some skills in here?

Carlos: Yes, yes. It's all the same. In here you have to go through the right channels, don't lose your temper, and don't give them the satisfaction of being able to say you're an animal.

Loyd: Bruce?

Bruce: It's going to be bars no matter how you look at it. It's almost a dual reality. Being inside opens the eyes by imprisoning you. And in that opening or awakening you begin to see the bars you had on the outside. This is also the first time I've been in jail and now I see that I was in prison out there, too. I just didn't realize that there were bars. There were ruts and certain habits I had that would just repeat themselves endlessly day after day and week after week, till finally I just caved in emotionally.

I should have said, "Enough!" But I kept on going because it was the routine. I can see that that's how it will be, more or less, when I get out. Only instead of brick walls or fences like you see in jail, the fences are going to be of a more socially structured environment. For instance, one of the conditions of my being out there might be a clean urine sample. And in some ways that's going to be harder because when you're fenced in you can see the bars. But, out there, there's a lot of temptations for somebody with my lifestyle. Let's say some voluptuous blonde comes up and asks me if I want to smoke a joint and get it on. Now that's quite a temptation. And that's something, I have to admit, I don't see anything wrong with and I'm not going to do what I do just to appease somebody else. Censorship again. In a way it's a reality that will never go away. There's nothing I can do about it, except hope that the blonde who comes on to me is into lemon juice.

Loyd: Glenn, how do you see censorship on the outside?

Glenn: Hmmm. What's the right response? Censorship is going to remain a reality in the world. But our real trouble, on the social level, comes from within ourselves, within our own being. And, as Goethe says in *Faust*, anyone who does not know how to rule his own inborn will is destined to do another's. In other

words, if we really want to stop it, we've got to stop it in ourselves. Censorship, in my opinion, is not a social phenomenon; it's an individual phenomenon.

Loyd: Let's look at a couple of particular instances. Recently at Kent, there was something printed in the inmate paper that the Warden didn't like so he cancelled the paper. There was another incident in California where an inmate, who was writing and publishing in magazines, wrote a piece the Warden there didn't like. The article wasn't censored, it was too late for that; the writer was censored. He was no longer allowed to publish. How do you respond to those instances of censorship?

Carlos: It was just an excuse.

Loyd: You mean they needed an excuse to stop these inmates writing?

Carlos: Yes. It was an excuse. I believe that any time someone criticizes the system, saying things that are true but that they don't like to hear or don't want to know, they just try to find another excuse to shut it down.

Loyd: Well, what *good* comes of articles that are critical of the institutions?

Carlos: It's amazing. Especially if you get it out, even to another institution, it's amazing. Things become better, fifty percent better right away. Within each institution there's really a very statistical sense of the inmate. They have not looked at us even once or at what's really going on. They haven't noticed. And they really don't want to. But how can you make things better—for the institution or for us—like that? So we need things more open—more human rights. When people read these papers on the outside about how the system is in here, how rotten it is, how sadistic, of course they wouldn't like it and they would finally shut it down.

Bruce: In other words, if Petro-Canada is funding your research, don't come up with papers about how oil-damaged the Canadian Arctic is or they're going to cancel your contract. That's the way it works. The way they see it is that anything they allow you to do, like print a prison newspaper or pass correspondence to the street, is divine beneficence on their part. And look how you repay them: you bite the hand that gives you these little freedoms. Therefore, they're just doing their moral duty in holding down your correspondence. Right? They say, "We're giving them a chance and this is how this particular individual handles himself. He is obviously not ready for society yet because he is still demonstrating antisocial energy."

Translated: "He is pissing me off and I'm going to fucking get him."

Loyd: Let's go on to the question that spawned this issue of **Prison Journal**: what do you do if you're going to publish something like the **Prison Journal** and the issue of what *kind* of inmate you're going to publish comes up? Do you accept submissions from both PC and Population and simply put the author's name after each paper, and that's it?

Carlos: Well, you don't have to say whether this person is PC or this person is Population. But suppose the person who wrote the article is a sex offender of children. What kind of moral principles is he reflecting in that paper? We cannot just publish it openly without censoring it. You have to be sure the message that guy's writing is a positive one.

Loyd: Well, we have negative articles coming from the Population, too. When you're talking about prison experience, you don't get a lot of positive articles.

Glenn: I'm just really wondering about Perhaps I fail to see the validity of the issue. It seems to me that a lot of literature has come out of prisons over the years, everything from Dostoevsky to the Marquis de Sade. Now there's a good example of the range of literature that's produced by men in prison—whether they're in for a sex offence or another crime. And what that says to me is that the issue is part of the prison subculture. But the issue itself is not really unique, and I think the answer to it has already been made. The history of literature has already set the answer up for us. Censorship is ridiculous. What gets published is already set out in the mandate of the **Prison Journal**. What is the mandate of the **Prison Journal**?

Loyd: Basically, the mandate is to reflect the prison experience. But then the question arises: what's the definition of a prisoner? And the one that's being offered—to counter what you're saying—is that PC inmates are not prisoners; they're, in fact, asylum inmates.

Glenn: Part of this particular issue comes from self-pride. People tend to categorize themselves and that's really convenient. And that is the sort of thing that causes social dissidence. And we may put it outside ourselves by projecting and saying it belongs to someone else—which happens. It happens with the administrators and the prison population. Prejudices and biases—they have them, everybody has them. Being aware of this is important. Not all people, I think, are aware of their prejudices and biases.

It seems odd or ironic to me that you would want to plead for justice and fairness and good treatment and then *not* be fair to someone else. It goes back to the principle of "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you." It's nothing really profound; it's very simple.

Bruce: The way I look at the whole issue is that censorship sort of sucks. I was surprised to hear that it's more prevalent in Matsqui than in Kent because I would expect to hear even more from Kent.

Loyd: The consensus at Kent is that contributors should be labelled in some way—either where they are in the institution, which institution they're in, or something to do with their crime. Put yourself in our position. You're the editor, the publisher. Who gets in the **Journal**? And if both PC and Population get in, what do we do about it? I hear from Glenn that we do nothing. We don't designate them; we give their names only. Their piece gets in if it has literary merit. Right?

Glenn: Yes.

Carlos: There are three choices. First, you can keep it away from PC people. But, of course, that's not right because everyone has a right to present his writing. Second, to censor what they say. Suppose somebody writes a paper or an article. You can say, "Wait a minute, you can't say this. You can't say that." So, you censor what they are saying. Then the third option is to put your name on it. If you think what you say is true, if it's coming from your heart, and you believe in it, then put your name to it.

Loyd: Just the name?

Carlos: And where you're coming from.

Loyd: It would be Joe Blow, Kent, PC?

Carlos: If you're a hundred percent sure of what you're saying, and you want to be published, then you are not afraid to say who you are and where you're coming from.

Loyd: Bruce, how do you answer the question?

Bruce: I wouldn't care who it was from. But, if somebody writes an article that would make all prisoners look bad Let's say some guy really went off the wall and said that sex with eleven-year-old girls is really decent, something like that, I wouldn't

Loyd: So, that wouldn't get into the **Journal**?

Bruce: Right. I think that censorship in that regard should be activated. Because

that is something that nobody wants to be tied with. I wouldn't put my work beside something that condones sex with kids. And also that people should, whatever they're putting in there, be proud of it, and say where they're from and what their names are.

Loyd: You're agreeing totally with Carlos?

Bruce: Yes.

Loyd: Glenn looks like he's going to change his mind or say something else

Glenn: No. I was just thinking that all our reactions are in agreement on one particular note. We are all agreeing that there's a certain standard and that standard comes back to the editor. But what are the editor's standards? His standards of censorship come from a tradition laid down in literature. If he's a good editor, he's going to pick up on things like this in terms of quality because of his standards. The issue in itself is really self-explanatory.

Loyd: But there's a fundamental disagreement here as well. You say that once we've established a piece to be of literary quality, we say, "All right, this is acceptable." Then Carlos and Bruce—I think you're different here—are saying we put down their name and put down where they are.

Carlos: *If* you don't want to censor the paper.

Loyd: Right. It stands on its own; we're not going to censor the paper. If we're going to edit the paper, we do so to make it come out as a literary piece. Then, if we do as Carlos and Bruce suggest, we put down their name and where they're from. You're saying, if I'm hearing you correctly, just put down their name.

Glenn: Well, it depends. I would go with whatever format or standards are appropriate to that type of periodical. But, again, that's an editorial consideration. If somebody would like to have that information put in, fine. If somebody, maybe in the Population, doesn't want to broadcast that information because they don't want anybody to know they're in jail, that's another consideration.

Something that really strikes me here is that people change. Everybody has the potential to change. And that can happen to a man who made a mistake, whether he's robbed a doughnut store or he's done some heinous crime. Why can't he change? Why is he not capable of change? And if he is capable of change and he has some good thoughts in his writing and can achieve a standard of literature, it could be a good piece of work.

You know. Let the thing stand on its own merit.

Mask

why do you see so much in my face
 when no one else sees past the mask?
 it's carefully constructed, no flaws i can find
 years were spent perfecting the work
 i sculpted the lines with deliberate hand
 creating the impassive expression of repose
 with leeway for a slight twitch of amusement
 or faint tinges of disgust or anger
 each curve and angle serves its purpose
 hiding what's really beneath
 the colouring painted true to nature
 stroked on with the finest brush
 the total effect is quite realistic
 plenty good enough to fool anyone
 or so i thought
 when i'm not looking, do you pull up the edge
 to take a peek underneath?

J. E. Telfer

The Pen

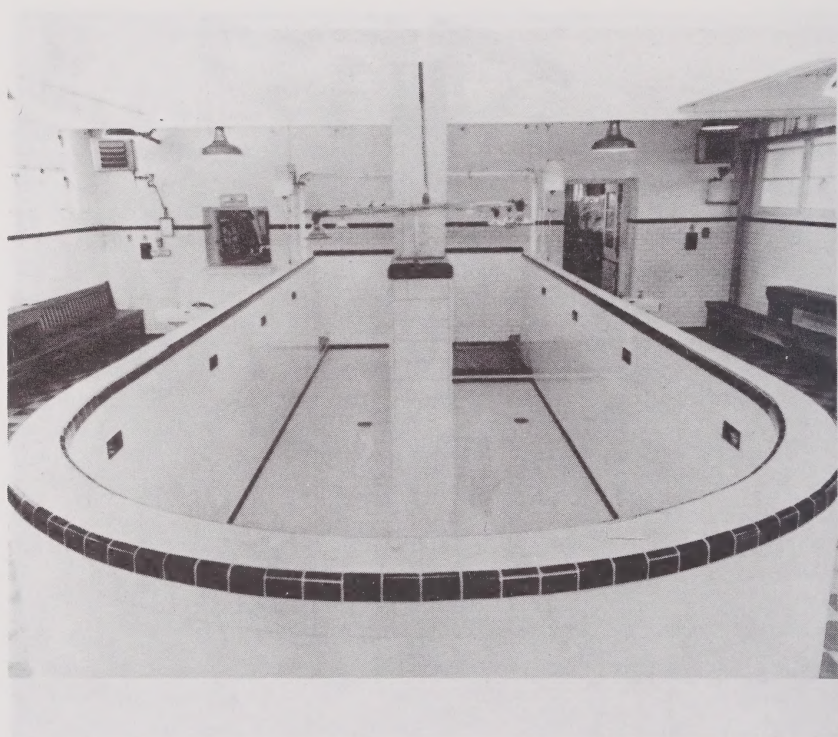


The Pen

THE PENITENTIARY IS A PLACE WHERE THE
PRISONER IS TO BE REHABILITATED
AND NOT A PLACE WHERE HE IS TO BE
PUNISHED.

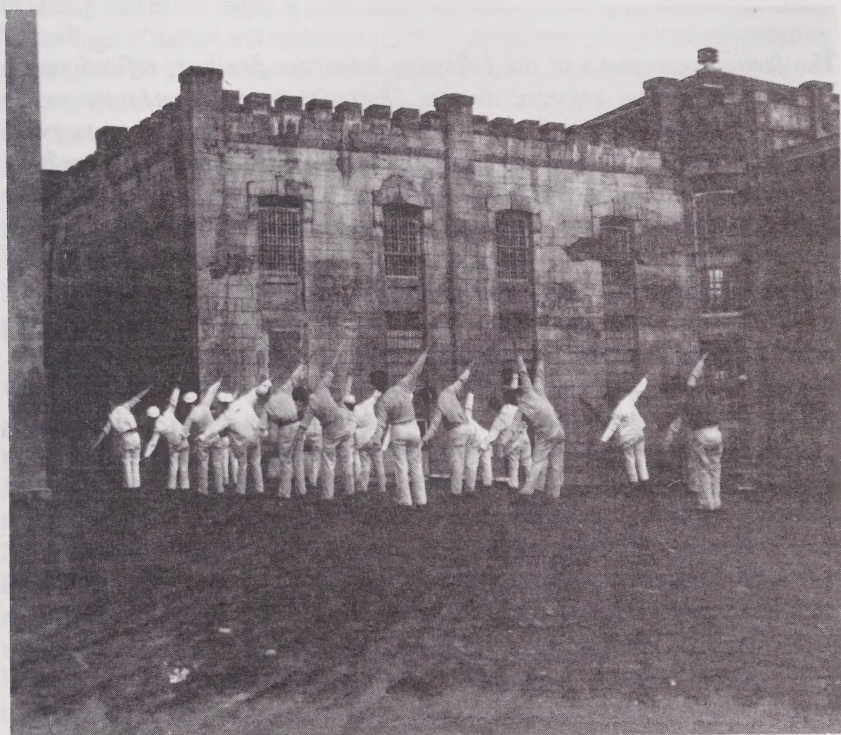






Reflections in a dark mirror

The solitary confinement of the 19th century was a dark mirror reflecting the society of the time. It was a place where the most desperate and dangerous of men were sent, and where they were often left to rot. The system was designed to punish and to reform, but it was also a place where men were often left to die. The system was a reflection of the society it was created in, and it was a dark mirror.



of every day — or perhaps with a few exceptions — and frequently did not even know the names of the men who lived in the cells. The system was designed to punish and to reform, but it was also a place where men were often left to die. The system was a reflection of the society it was created in, and it was a dark mirror. The system was designed to punish and to reform, but it was also a place where men were often left to die. The system was a reflection of the society it was created in, and it was a dark mirror.

Letter from Attica

How can one man be free

While others take the count behind barred doors and metal fences?

Brian Fawcett, "Make the Body Move"

The feelings expressed in the following letter are familiar: reflections on solitary confinement, enforced idleness, "hatred and resentment for the people and the system of authority," rage, lack of privacy, lack of physical contact with visitors, and more. Those of us who feel we know prisons and prisoners have "heard it all before." And, with this response, we distance ourselves from the reality behind the words. Sometimes, we even mutter to ourselves, "Don't whine. Do the time." Given the repetition of the complaints, we may lose the will to hear the intensity of the singular human voice.

Thus we distance ourselves from the various meanings of freedom—the word and the layered realities it represents—for the prisoner and for ourselves. We forget that the "barred doors and metal fences" do create separateness, a separateness that we cannot truly understand or know.

Mr Curcio reminds readers that, under the most adverse circumstances, people need to articulate their thoughts and feelings. That a "homemade education" will take place even in a prison. That an understanding of the mechanisms of social control will help resolve "the struggle to teach one another." Perhaps, his letter will remain long enough in memory to enable us to contrast our own "freedoms" with the highly restricted life he lives in Attica.

Hendrik Hoekema

Reflections in the SHU

In solitary confinement [Special Handling Unit or SHU] here in Attica, closing in on my forty-eighth month, I encounter another day in the confines of the foe. Without structured educational or vocational training programs, and with but limited organized recreational activities, and no work at all for the majority of us sitting idle in our cages, a sense of powerlessness emerges, followed closely by feelings of hatred and resentment for the people and the system of authority responsible for these abuses. There's not even a legal point at which a prisoner must be removed to a less secure and thus more productive prison environment. Our feelings of rage and personal impotence are increased since every petty rule is enforced and any infraction—even the slightest—is punished to the max, even though no objectively defined correctional goal is being sought. In my own case, I've been kept in this prison within a prison because of my political beliefs and for being "antisocial." Since there is no correctional goal being served by keeping me in this prison within a prison all these years, what is the underlying purpose of such confinement?

This SHU's purpose is to control political and revolutionary attitudes within the prison system and in the society at large. We are locked down in this prison within a prison in cages twenty-three hours a day. But lockdown in this prison means more: no contact visits occur, prisoners are separated by a table from their visitors, and the whole visit is monitored by two cameras and a tape recorder. No one is allowed to use the main law library and we are allowed only limited legal materials; Spanish-speaking prisoners, for example, are deprived of the law in their mother language. There are no religious services and many of us are deprived of practising our faith, and when we do wish to practise it we are punished. Outdoor exercise for the required one hour daily is spent in a six-by-eight-foot cage monitored by cameras. The unit area is also monitored by cameras and everything is tape recorded. Prisoners are required to turn in their cups, spoons, trays, milk containers, and bowls at every meal. Mail—incoming or outgoing—is tampered with and sometimes xeroxed, and frequently delayed or undelivered. The prison rules change from day to day and policy enforcement is most arbitrary. This SHU, once a reception centre, is now used to try and tame those classified as the most violent prisoners in the prison and in the correctional system as a whole. The bloody history of this SHU has shown that its isolation and repression provoked the very behaviour it is purportedly designed to stem. Its history also reveals that placement in this SHU is for political activity, in particular for those prisoners who speak out against unconstitutional prison conditions.

I've never been one for inaction. Everything I've ever felt strongly about, I've done something about. I guess that's why—unable to do anything else—I soon began exhausting my frustration by writing to people. I still marvel at how swiftly my previous life's thinking pattern slid away from me. This change all began while I was in the infamous Great Meadows Correctional Facility SHU. Many times I had become increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote. The best thing I could do was to get hold of a dictionary—to study, to learn some words. Actually, the dictionary was like a miniature encyclopedia for me; I suppose it was inevitable that, as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book, read, and now begin to understand what the book was saying. I never had been so truly free in my life, until this experience. A new world opened up for me. I knew *right here in prison* that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long-dormant craving to be mentally alive. I certainly wasn't seeking any degree, the way a college confers a status symbol to its students. My homemade education gave me, with every additional book I read, a little more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness, and blindness. I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity—because you can hardly mention anything I'm not curious about. Prison enabled me to study far more intensively than I would have if my life had gone differently. Where else but in prison could I have attacked my ignorance by being able to study intensely every day?

That the criminal justice system of the United States is a façade for gross and shocking violations of the legal and human rights of Third World people and poor citizens can be confirmed by an examination of the prisons of the society. The prisons and jails in the United States have become bulging warehouses for Third World people, the uneducated, and the unemployed. They provide a legally sanctioned instrument for social, political, and economic control. Upon entering prison, one is stripped naked, forced to undergo rectal and other body cavity searches, denied personal clothing and effects, and given an institutional number in place of a name. In Attica, they put you through a status degradation ceremony, stripping you—deliberately and with relish in some cases—of all self-esteem, self-respect, human sensibility, and sense of responsibility. This ceremony is designed to punish, humble, humiliate, and shame.

I've seen guys in here that have been literally destroyed, broken, turned into vegetables, because of political activism in prison, especially inside the SHUs. Many of us are beginning to or have gained a political consciousness about our incarceration and the relationship of our oppressed nations to the state of colonialism. We who have nothing to look forward to but long years of enforced idleness, coupled with programs designed to destroy our bodies, minds, and

spirits—designed to render us incapable of any future assistance to our people—have the historical duty of casting aside all fear, selfishness, and individualism, and dedicating our energies, talents, goods, and lives to constructing the fighting arm of colonized masses. The collective activities among us are the most important. Our objective in this area is to change the relationship of forces between the prison administration and us by gaining effective control of as many areas of prison life as possible.

This control will allow us to more effectively recruit, organize, and train *ourselves*. It is a necessary step in our struggle to teach one another. The more control we develop inside this SHU and in prison, and the more legal expertise we pick up, the easier it will be to challenge in court the legality of this prison within a prison in Attica.

Antonio Curcio
Attica, New York
1 May 1988

The Man in the Mirror

The man in the mirror
 is a friend of mine.
 I can reach him most of the time
 but so often he talks to me
 while checking his reflection.
 I wish he wasn't so worried about how he is perceived.
 No one here is half as concerned about his appearance
 as he appears to be.
 Stiff-necked, so as to not upset his freshly combed hair,
 he moves away from
 the mirror on the wall. He seats himself and to my surprise
 he reaches out
 and picks up a hand-held mirror strategically placed
 within arm's reach of his desk,
 and he checks his hair to make sure he didn't
 upset it along the way of
 his six-and-a-half-foot journey from the sink to his desk.
 I wish I could help him but I don't know what I could say and
 even if I did I
 wouldn't know whether to say it to him or to the mirror
 because I am starting
 to wonder which is really him, the reflection or the
 three-dimensional version
 I see.

In a desperate attempt to help him I reach out
 and grab the mirror to talk
 to him and I see he's not there. Instead, I see
 my own reflection staring back
 at me and I realize that before I can ever consider
 telling him about his problems,
 I should first look at myself and my own problems.

The two men in the mirrors are friends of mine.

Jeff Ewert
 Kent Prison, K Unit

Censorship and Repression

A Brief Look in a Cracked Mirror

Censorship is commonly understood to be an externally imposed constraint upon individual expression such as Dad telling Junior to shut up, the Ayatollah Khomeini crying for the death of Salman Rushdie, and the legislation that keeps foreign-made hate literature and violent pornography from entering our country. In contrast, repression is an internally imposed constraint upon one's own thought or feeling such as denying to oneself the desire for sex with a family member, the urge to punch Father in the face, or the impulse to urinate on the preacher's shoe. Censorship and repression both exclude something from consciousness.

Censorship is a necessary result of man's obsessive urge for order and his need to know. Chaos must be censored, and the irrational repressed if order is to rule. Art must imitate nature in a recognizable way, and literature must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Unexplored territory must be charted and the wild must be tamed. Man, it seems, cannot bear the disorder of not knowing.

In the life of the uneducated child, however, censorship is a necessary evil. Even the gentlest and most caring of homes is full of dangerous unknowns. There are stairs to fall down, hot stuff to be pulled off stoves, and doorways to be wandered through. Once outside, an innocent wanderer faces innumerable dangers. Even the finest of neighbourhoods has hostile corners, dark alleyways, and perilous streets. If children are to be safe in a threatening world, parents must set limits on the expression of a child's nature to explore every nook and cranny, to touch everything, and to ingest whatever it can fit into its mouth. In this world of real physical danger, parent and child alike must pay attention to fear.

As a matter of necessity, adults watch over children. Parents must impose a safe order upon the dangerous disorder of childhood. However, parents are people, too. This means that Mom and Dad, who always know less than everything, occasionally put their own interests first, and occasionally heed their own irrational fears. When parental *don'ts* severely exceed parental *do's*, "watching over" becomes surveillance, cautionary guidance becomes repressive interference, parent and child become enemies.

If Tom and Jenny are told never to play with Moishe, Sanjeev, or the Twists' kid, Oliver; if curious Charlie is told not to look, not to point, and that good boys and girls should be seen and not heard; if four-year-old crying laughing Jenny is continually ordered, "Don't do that, don't be such a child"; if Mom too often

stops Sally and Johnny and Jimmy from touching one another's genitals in the tub; if Dad shouts, "Don't you dare raise your voice to me, Billy," punctuating his commands with punches; if parents often promise, and sometimes deliver, a visit from the bogeyman when Vern doesn't do as he's told—then Mom and Dad may be producing little citizens best suited for employment at Argentinian soccer stadiums or on local Censorship Boards. Such children are not allowed to find their own answers. They are not allowed to know themselves or to have voices of their own. If these children are not empowered to act openly, they become devious. They internalize a world of negatively-ordered safety. Rather than knowing the security of self-reliance, these children harbour an insecurity born of helplessness and powerlessness. They know how to survive only by resorting to the prescriptions of a moral and psychic order built on brittle "don'ts." Such children order rather than ask, take rather than share, aggress rather than assert, repress rather than feel, and censor rather than tolerate.

In turn, the child becomes the parent, and what went around comes around to a new generation. In a like manner, what was once called the Canadian Penitentiary Service has been euphemistically renamed Correctional Service of Canada. (O, brave new world!) From the "correction" of its title, one might expect this social agency to be doing its best to correct mistakes made by the parents of its charges. Instead, as a bureaucracy that maintains internal control via censorship and repression, it perpetuates rather than corrects the pathology of its clients. Our prisons reflect parental failure, like a cracked mirror.

Censorship pervades every aspect of prison life. From the moment of arrest and throughout his incarceration, a man in prison is aware that his "words may be taken down and used against him." Both written and spoken communication within a prison may be monitored and recorded by CSC staff. Open to scrutiny are nearly all outgoing and incoming correspondence, most conversations in phone booths and visiting areas, all conversations between prisoners and CSC staff, all interaction between personal visitors and prisoners, all paper that a prisoner signs his name to or that is deemed to be in his possession or of his authorship (whether a note to oneself left in a cell or a submission to the *Prison Journal*). Prisoners learn not to kiss their wives, girlfriends, or mothers for too long—and, even when amongst friends, to be careful how they phrase endearments or expressions of frustration and anger.

Everything but a prisoner's internal activity is open to the view of CSC staff. Whether it be through prison bars, peek-a-boo windows in solid doors, or open curtains, a prisoner's most private moments, and parts, are on display. Whether defecating, masturbating, or picking his nose, a prisoner is on exhibition and must be prepared to be interrupted at any moment. He is watched and he becomes watchful. In retaliation he may flaunt deviant behaviour, or he may hide it. He comes to censor himself and often reacts by doing to others what has been done to him.

For the most part, prison does not condone human sexuality and it is perhaps the prisoner's sexual being that is most severely censored by the conditions of prison life. By denying prisoners heterosexual relations, prison promotes autoeroticism and homosexuality, practices often condemned by society at large. Any predisposition to sexual deviance is supported by gaol's unisexual environment. The presence of females in prison is just as likely to increase tension and resentment as it is to relieve frustration and bitterness.

Prison uniforms, rules, cell blocks—in fact the totality of prison life—tend to censor individual expression and promote sameness in the name of bureaucratic order and economic good sense. Prison's suffocating regimentation, its deprivation of normal sexual functioning, and its environment of total surveillance may combine with the prisoner's isolation to convince him that he cannot escape, even for a moment, his keeper's watchful eye and choking grasp. Consequently, the prisoner may begin to think that, not only will his "words be taken down and used against him," but that his thoughts may be treated likewise. At this point, self-censorship takes a walk with repression; Al [Foster] and Clifford [Olson] begin their journeys onto Canada's front pages.

Not only convicts must fit into a pecking order that constrains self-expression. Not only convicts suffer from pressures that warp human development. The supervisor of a crew of guards orders his men, "Don't eat with her, she's a con lover"; a dishwasher demands that the part-time help stack the dishes "just so"; a premier gags a cabinet or refuses funding for abortions; a religious dictator commands the devout to kill blasphemers. And David Suzuki, who is a proponent of intellectual and ethnic tolerance, calls for the termination of Philippe Rushton's employment. According to what circumstances will allow, each establishes mental/emotional/spiritual equilibrium by censoring others.

Censorship was chosen as the theme for this issue of the **Prison Journal** in response to a request that it not publish writing from Protective Custody inmates. This request by General Population inmates is an exercise of their right to free expression. They have exercised that right without excising mine, so I have no quarrel with them. That rats and skinnners are treated with disapprobation comes as no surprise. Most, if not all, people suffer from being located in some pecking order. The more difficult the times, the more disadvantaged the peckees, the harder the peckers peck. Moreover, peckers and peckees alike will do well to heed the implied caution of the dictum, "What goes around comes around."

In a relativistic universe there are no absolute rights, including that of free expression; in a world of original sin, censorship is a necessary evil; between too much and too little lies the hard-to-find path of just enough. Finally, our lives are as mirrors one to another, casting reflections fragmented along the cracks in our selves, but true reflections nonetheless.

Roy Aney
Mountain Prison

Pig Face

The pig-faced boy
with dirty little fingers.

Piggy.

Piggy.

PIGGY.

Foul-mouthed imbecile.

EGOTISTICAL.

lost

What is he doing in the filing cabinet? There's organized,
rational-legal based,
education files in there.

Dirty, dung fingerprints of the pig-faced kid are everywhere.
The coffee disappears—
supplies disappear— What is he even doing here?

Today I took the plant that was slowly dying of thirst, right out from
under his fat nose,
and replenished the soil.

The pig-faced boy—
inside himself so deep he will never see out,
gave his shadow a black eye because he's
too blind to live
out his own fantasies—too uncoordinated to be playful
with air.

Clumsily tripping, stubbing and stepping on toes as
he runs for the open trough.

Jeff Ewert
Kent Prison, K Unit

Of Black Holes and Microphones and "The Good Order of the Institution"

Nowhere in society is censorship more strongly felt than within the Canadian Penitentiary System: *everything* is subject to censorship. For example, magazines dedicated to firearms and instruments considered to be offensive (e.g., knives) are banned, as are books and magazines which promote or seemingly promote violence or hatred toward women, children, and others. Certain forms of pornography that are available to the public are also banned. Generally, such publications fall into the category of bondage, homosexuality, and explicit/simulated sexual material.

The last of this list again poses a dilemma for those deciding the boundaries that conform to community standards. The rule of thumb has been that prisoners can have access to anything that is available so long as it meets those standards. The problem of censorship arises when one asks *whose* standards are used. A particular censor in an institution may have an extreme attitude, not allowing even a bare knee to be shown. Another may consider simulated or explicit intercourse fine. Some years ago, the Canada Customs Moral Police decided to start blotting out areas of anatomy in the pornographic magazines. This censorship applied to certain "wide open" poses only. Someone at the institution I was at decided this censorship wasn't good enough. He or she then went through each skin magazine and blotted out some more. After being subjected to this visual assault for several months, many of the prisoners felt that some evolutionary change had taken place in the anatomy of women. It didn't seem *right* to think of a woman as having a black hole in place of her sexual organs. Some felt that astronomers should be contacted to investigate this.

Another incident that comes to mind is an article that was physically removed from a magazine. It concerned the NRA's lobbying efforts to legalize the ownership of automatic weapons in the US. I read the article later on in another institution, only to find that the author was totally against ownership of automatic weapons. He had documented incidents of gun nuts who possessed these types of weapons just on the chance that they could go out and kill. The article aimed at *dissuading* anyone supporting the lobbying efforts of the NRA. The article was probably ripped out because of the explicit photographs of these weapons in various stages of assembly. But I would have thought the CSC should welcome an article denouncing violence, enabling some prisoners to re-evaluate attitudes they might hold.

Within each institution, a newsletter is published on a weekly or biweekly basis. Its purpose is to inform the institution's population of changes in administrative policies, upcoming events, etc. An inmate magazine is also usually published (however erratically), which is available to the general public for a subscription fee. This magazine comprises short stories or poetry and articles concerning inmates' views on legal, moral, and ethical issues. Including *anything* in these magazines depends on approval by a board of censors at each institution. As a rule, articles which are deemed to be overly critical or biased against the administrative policies of the institution and individuals or the CSC are banned. Also, articles which are considered to be inflammatory (to the good order of the institution) are banned.

One such article related to the use of microphoned tables in the visiting areas of maximum- and medium-security institutions. These tables were installed in 1982–83 across Canada for the purpose of gathering information relating to breaches in the security and/or good order of the institution. The question in my mind at the time was whether that information would be used exclusively by the CSC. In my short article for the joint paper, I stated that, in my opinion, this information would *not* be confined to the CSC but would be shared with other agencies (i.e., local police, RCMP, etc.). I felt that, legally, the use of microphones was wrong because visitors' private conversations were subjected to monitoring. This legal concern was circumvented by posting plaques warning that all conversations were subject to electronic monitoring and recording. Since being in prison already produces tension within families, this tension is increased when members feel they cannot express their inner feelings for fear that something they say may be interpreted in a manner that would affect them adversely. Invariably, this tension is translated into anger; that anger is eventually focussed on anyone in authority. I asked other questions: who was going to interpret these conversations? What happens if someone gets paranoid, deciding a conspiracy is happening? Do the police get into the act?

Shortly after I submitted the article, I was called to the Warden's office to meet with the head of Regional Security. During the interview, I was asked if I had read a classified document relating to microphones. I replied that I had not. I was then returned to a maximum-security institution. The reason given for this transfer was that I had attempted to incite the population of the institution.

Any opinion expressed by inmates (and, in some cases, even staff members) can and will be censored. Sanctions such as arbitrary transfers to higher security or to other regions in Canada, and harassment through charges can take place. With staff members who violate this code, sanctions can range from verbal reprimands and suspensions to being relieved of duties. As a rationale, "for the good order of the institution" can be used to cover (up) just about any situation.

Eddie Rouse

Prisoner

Writer Timothy Findley is former president of PEN Canada (English chapter), an organization working for the release of imprisoned writers throughout the world. In 1988, Mr Findley visited William Head Institution on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, to read and meet with SFU/Metchosin prisoner-students.

We were all expecting it, I guess. Arnie's drinking had become so intense, something negative had to come of it. It certainly wasn't going to help him, even though I'm sure, in the worst of times, he thought it was going to save him. Sometimes he would 'phone up—drunk—at nine o'clock in the morning, or seven o'clock at night when you were sitting down to dinner—and he'd say: *Tell me I'm not going to croak, kid. Just say, Arnie, you aren't going to croak. That's all I want to hear. Then, I'll hang up*

After that, he would wait and you could hear him trying to breathe—to catch his breath—and there was nothing else you could do but say it—just to get rid of him: *Arnie, you aren't going to croak.*

Thanks, kid, he'd say—and the telephone would die in your hand.

All his adult life, he'd carried a bottle. A bottle or a glass. Beer stood in for wine and wine stood in for rye. Once in a while, when he could afford it, he'd blow himself to a bottle of brandy, heave a great sigh, and drink it from a snifter—just as if he was any ordinary after-dinner drinker. Just as if he had waited all day long to hold that snifter under his nose.

He couldn't keep a job and, in the long run, he gave up working altogether. I guess his occupation was emptying bottles; drinking was his profession.

Once Arnie realized he didn't have to work, he sought out people who could support his habit "in the style to which it has become accustomed." It was our sister, Gloria, who said that—and she was eminently qualified herself for under-the-table honours. The difference was that Gloria never let the effects of her drinking prevent her from getting the other things she wanted out of life.

Gloria wanted to prove she was whole—if such a statement can be made about a Sherman tank. She was always on the offensive—using all her firepower to blast through paper walls—the same way she blasted through concrete. Sometimes I used to think that Gloria's very first words were *I'm coming through!* On the other hand, she made it, Scotch in hand, right to the top of her profession. She was a costume designer for TV shows; the fat girl, dressing the anorexic actresses: *This is how I look inside.*

Gloria was killed last year while making an illegal left-hand turn on Avenue Road. But the other guy was at fault, so all the witnesses said. His speedometer was locked at ninety-five and his corpse was riddled with cocaine. *Alcoholic killed by coke-head*. The new had done in the old. *Gloria Bofers—dead at fifty-two*.

Anyway, about Arnie. More or less the way Gloria had said he would, he sent his habit looking for a bankroll. Theft and blackmail were beneath his dignity, you see. The money had to walk in through the door of its own free will. Or, at least, it had to walk in through the door without delusions. Whoever married Arnie would have to know what she was getting. The truth. But Arnie, back in the time when he was courting—long before Gloria died—had a reservoir of charm that seems to be part of every alcoholic's natural equipment. He knew how to parlay what remained of his youthful looks into bedding procedures anyone less appealing would be arrested for. He was good, as they say, with his hands.

He also knew, innately, how to wear his meagre wardrobe like a gentleman. He even called his measly stock of Harris tweed jackets and tailored wool slacks his "mating uniform." His two pairs of shoes were always polished. His shirts were always impeccable. Dressed for the game of catch-wife, Arnie could be taken anywhere and would never prove an embarrassment. He had taught himself, by rigid discipline, how to stand upright even when utterly pissed and he only ever vomited in back-street gutters—never in expensive living rooms—never in a host's front hall.

And so, as time went by, he drew the wealthy Selena Markle into his confidence. *If I don't stop drinking, I'll croak*, he told her, probably shedding a tear or two. When it came to life and death, Arnie was utterly shameless. And so he convinced Selena that she—and only she—could save him, and he won her. It took about three months of highly disciplined self-control to do this, doling out his drink in measuring cups and spoons behind her back.

The wedding was a comedy. Black, but hilarious.

I was Arnie's best man—only because he hadn't any friends and, besides, *A brother ought to stand up for a brother*, so Arnie said. *Who the hell else have I got?* Carling O'Keefe, I might have suggested.

Gloria tried until the very last second—right to the moment Selena walked down the aisle on her father's arm—to stop her. Everyone could hear her frantic efforts in the chapel vestibule: *Think of your future, Selena*. Gloria's voice sailed up above the music. *Think of your children. Think of what remains of your sanity* But Selena was determined. She would prove that Arnie Bofers could be salvaged. The rest of us would eat our words.

The salvage never happened.

After eleven years of marriage and after Arnie had laid the last of his hammerlocks on her dignity, Selena took what remained of her possessions—Arnie having sold the rest of them—and ran.

The real estate she could not wrest from him. She had been fool enough in the flush of love to sign it all over to him. Now, it would cost her life to take him to court—and all Selena wanted was survival. And so, by selling the furniture, the car, the cottage, the house, and—finally—his Harris tweed jackets, Arnie drank his way to the final stages.

Tell me I'm not going to croak, kid. That's all I want to hear.

It was probably the last thing he did hear before the silence that now surrounds him.

The next time I saw him—maybe two years after Selena's departure, maybe three weeks after his final telephone call—I was taken down a fifth-floor corridor of St. Michael's Hospital and shown a man whose back was to me—in a wheelchair.

He was sitting, falling forward, in the sunlight of a late spring afternoon. The orderlies had tied him into the wheelchair with a safety belt around his waist. His wrists were bound to the metal arms of the chair and he wore a blue wool scarf wound round his neck and tucked into a drab grey dressing-gown. When I had seen him last, he was a man of forty-eight, clean-shaven, bleary-eyed but upright. Now, I was confronted with a wasted, corpse-like figure whose mouth was permanently open—whose hair had fallen out and whose hands were the paper-thin hands of an invalid. No more glasses—no more bottles to hold.

They called what was wrong with him somebody's *syndrome* and then told me it's what happens when the body gets so busy feeding the alcoholism it forgets to feed the brain.

When I said: *Hello*, he didn't move. When I said: *It's me, Arn—the kid*, he looked up slowly into my face and his expression broke my heart. My brother Arnie wasn't there. And whoever was there didn't know who I was. He stared at me in animal alarm.

"Do I know you?" he said. He seemed to think I might attack him.

He looked like a refugee from a cancer ward. He also looked like a man of seventy-eight—not forty-eight—who had endured a lifetime of weight loss.

Later, after all the attempts to recover his mind had failed—my wife and I had Arnie committed to an institution. I telephoned Selena to tell her what we were doing. She said she had known it would come to this—and, without apology, she said it was a blessed relief.

A relief, perhaps. But hardly blessed. Still, there would be no more 'phone calls forcing us to tell him he wasn't going to croak.

Now, though, I go to visit him every once in a while and I try to take some solace from the fact that at least he's somewhere clean and sunlit, fed and cared

for, tucked into bed at night—and into his wheelchair every morning. In some ways, a child. In other ways, a prisoner.

Somewhere inside the shell of bones and translucent skin—somewhere beyond our reach and his—the part of Arnie that once was wonderful is trapped and can never, now, escape. This part of him was put there—we all know this—a long, long time ago, before the time when he consciously gave up working and started questing after safety and found it—and destroyed it—in Selena; long before that. A door was closed. A key was turned. Who knows? A person can't ask why, anymore. There isn't anyone there up front to answer.

But I wonder if—in sleep, perhaps—Arnie ever dreams of someone banging on a door. And if he does, I can't help thinking—however appalling it sounds—that it might have been better—given all and all—if Arnie had been blown away like Gloria—making an illegal left—rather than being condemned to life imprisonment in a cell that no one can locate.

Timothy Findley

Let It R.I.P.

It was the influenza that was responsible for some of it. That elusive virus invaded the body and induced feverish chills and nausea; an insidious disease for which no one had yet found a surefire cure, or cause for that matter. Sure, they called it a virus, all those eminent doctors and scientists, but then they called almost every inexplicable illness a virus these days.

He rolled over onto his side on his small cot and shuddered involuntarily. His brow dripped beads of cold sweat and he had grown tired of wiping himself dry with his towel, now drenched as damp as most of his body. The worst of it was over at any rate, he thought. Surely, after five days, it was bound to break, to let up. That was the law of nature.

"But then what would I know about the law of nature!" he exclaimed suddenly, pushing aside the covers and leaping unsteadily to his feet. "Criminal laws are another story," he muttered, staring at the enormous bars securing the window of his cell. They were huge. Five inches in diameter. Iron bars; but no one can see the irony but me, he mused, smiling wryly. "A cell is a cell," he thought. With this flu business, things were different somehow. His perspective had fled and, because of this, he loathed himself.

He recalled his visit to the nursing station the day before yesterday. After submitting the usual request for medical attention, he now wondered if his wording on the form had been appropriate.

"I demand immediate medical attention for cancer," he had written. He knew that they had probably raised their medical eyebrows over that one. He laughed at the thought, a regular deputy dawg laugh. It had become part of his nature. A "characteristic," the psychologist would have termed it. An idiosyncrasy. "This man has a deputy dawg laugh originating from somewhere deep within his inherently devious nature!" Oh, he could imagine them writing that down all right. Why, it was probably buried in a report somewhere in his file right at this very moment.

In the distance a train whistle wailed. Once. Twice. Silence. He imagined a cumbersome, cast iron, one-eyed monster sliding over the tracks to places unknown. The whistle was routine. In the afternoon, late at night, and again early in the morning, it wailed. Anonymous routine. He considered labelling it with a name. "The Monster," he thought. That seemed apt. Suddenly, he felt very ill and staggered to the corner of the cell where he vomited toward the toilet, spewing forth a green bilish liquid. Feeling faint, he weakly pushed the flush button of the commode and unsteadily meandered back to his cot and reclined.

The rumbling sound of foul-smelling fluid resounded down the drain

He ignored the ice-cold of his steel-framed cot where it seared into his bare flesh like a hot firebrand. He thought about his trip to the nursing station. The prison guards had come for him with handcuffs, shackling him securely before leading him from the cell. They seemed nervous. Outside, in the open air, the blasts of frigid wind seemed to blow through his feverish body as he weaved a path across the courtyard. It seemed an eternity before they reached the inner sanctum of the nursing station. He sat waiting on the hard, wooden bench wondering why he had bothered to come. There was no real treatment available here, he only knew too well. There was no resident doctor. Just a handful of nursing staff who appeared to be even more incompetent than the administrative officials of the penitentiary. "One could die waiting," he thought. Some had. Interminably waiting.

When the nurse finally appeared she was wearing white plastic gloves and a blue facemask covering her mouth and nose, held in place by a slim elastic band. She was fiftyish and her hair was streaked with grey in patches as though it had been dabbed on with a paint brush. She led him into the examination room. The guards stood fidgeting at the entrance to the doorway.

"Kelly?" she mumbled sternly from behind the mask.

"No. It's Collins," he replied.

"Number?"

"235055A," he responded.

"You've claimed to have AIDS," she continued harshly.

"AIDS!" he exclaimed, interjecting quickly. "Who said that? I have cancer and the flu."

She suddenly seemed relieved, her entire demeanour changing as she removed the facemask. "Well, we will have to do some blood work and X-rays. For verification, of course."

"Oh, it's not that type of cancer," he said casually, enjoying the charade by now, though he was sweating profusely. "It's the other kind."

"What other kind?" she asked in obvious exasperation, frowning in his direction.

"The other kind," he replied. "Prison Cancer. Cancer of the mind. Cancer of the spirit. It's not treatable as far as I know. There's other names for it, I guess. I used to think it was pure, unadulterated hate, but it's more than that. Me, I just call it Prison Cancer. In fact, I diagnosed myself," he continued, rambling on now, scarcely conscious of what he was saying or where his talk was headed. "The cancer I can live with. There's not much physical pain, just a quiet sort of numbness that spreads and grips you with"

"All right, that's enough of that kind of talk now!" she yelled, motioning to the two guards with flailing hands. "Get him out of here."

The flu persisted, although he could sense its presence abating somewhat. Stretched out on his cot, he pulled the covers over himself. He knew it was almost that time. The death parade. The killing time. It was his daily routine. He dreaded the thought of his condition interfering with one of his few simple pleasures. He had three of them to do today. Four, including the nurse. He would start with her. He strove for determination beneath the covers. It would be messy as always. Particularly, the dismembering. He would enjoy flushing the evidence away down the toilet as always. It was routine of course. Imaginary routine. Why, how else could they expect a man with Prison Cancer to get by? He knew they understood.

Clyde Kennedy
Kent Prison, General Population

The Ballad of Raisin Hell

Raisin hell in the vineyard field
stompin and crushin
to make a good yield
feelin the grapes crush under my feet
Just squashin them suckers

Raisin hell's what I make best
just doin my thing
and fuck the rest
the grapes burn and twist
from the searing heat
just squashin them grapes
Raisin hell

Since I was born I was raisin hell
out there at night when my mom couldn't tell
I loved squashin them grapes
and seeing them die
Raisin hell is my piece of pie

Quinn A. Falk
Kent Prison, General Population

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.

In *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky forcefully argue that the government of the United States and its leading multinational corporate giants exercise near total control over what is published, broadcast, or televised in America. With a level of scholarship that silences all who would argue otherwise, Herman and Chomsky document five case studies on how—with the active participation of government and industry—TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines have distorted or trivialized world events.

The authors develop an intriguing tool for analyzing their claims: “the propaganda model.” Focussing on wealth, power relations, and their interactions with mass media interests, the model comprises five analytical sub-categories: size and the level of interconnected ownership of the media; the profit orientations and focus of advertising; the fundamental reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and “experts” who are funded and approved by these primary sources; “flak” as a means of disciplining the media; and “anti-communism” as a national religion and control mechanism.

The authors clearly document the high concentration of mutual ownership within the media. This analysis of ownership and size does not sit well with notions of “independence” held dearly in and out of the industry. The authors, in fact, conclude that the media are just that: an industry, one big business catering to the advertising needs of other big businesses.

The author’s most condemning charges are based on the media’s reliance on “official” sources. Case after case of purposeful misinformation by government is presented in the book. But not only do the media fail to question “official” sources who have their own agendas, they ignore contrary evidence.

Finally, with the religion of “anti-communism,” the media are easily manipulated into delivering the official line against positive news dealing with socialist countries. The authors demonstrate the voluntary censorship of the media during the Vietnam and Cambodia era. They compare the extensive coverage of the 1984 murder by state police of the Polish priest, Jerzy Popieluszko, with the deadly silence on the death of scores of priests and human rights activists within US client countries.

Herman and Chomsky’s diagnosis is disturbing. The western media are members of the corporate elite, complete with directorship interconnections and monopoly markets. The media are heavily influenced both internally and externally by right-wing, pro-capitalist ideology. This influence creates the perfect vehicle for state propaganda. With little fear of alternative information

within this "right-thinking" monopoly, the state has an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that its interpretation of world events is dominant.

The authors have only dealt with the US media. But if we apply their propaganda model to Canada, we can reach similar conclusions. For example, the "Indian problem" has a long history in our country. Yet, how the media portray Native Canadians' struggles and demands reflects both capitalist ideology and government policy. B. Singer, in a content analysis of Native issues in a large Ontario daily newspaper, demonstrates how the presentation or withholding of facts, the juxtaposition of selected news items, and their placement, all yield a particular perception of the "problem."¹ This study found that only 6.4 percent of reported Indian issues hit the front page. The mean page number of Indian issues was 11.2 and the median was 8.1. This placement is a clear reflection of the newspaper's organizational decision to place a low priority on Indian issues.

Even more interesting are the *types* of events reported. Government land claims took up 51.7 percent of news stories; "conflict" issues another 28.6 percent. Non-conflict stories, on the other hand, represented only 19.5 percent. The portrayal of Native Canadians as primarily involved in conflicts or seeking government funds reduces the understanding of readers. The results of these media decisions are reflected in public opinion polls on Native issues: *Canadians tend to see Native issues as conflict situations and demands for funds.*²

As I write this review, with the "white noise" of the "national steroid scandal" on the radio, I realize that the disconcerting thesis presented by Herman and Chomsky is just as relevant in our own backyard.³ Censorship and misinformation are the empirical manifestations of the imposition of an ideology upon others. In western society, the ideology imposed is that of a powerful and privileged minority. Herman and Chomsky give us the tools to understand—even defend ourselves from—an elite minority who control a population through mass communication and the mass media.

Ronald N. McGivern

¹ See Benjamin Singer, "Minorities in the Media: A Content Analysis of Native Canadians in the Daily Press," in *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1982, 19:3, pp. 348–59.

² See R. Ponting, "Public Opinion on Aboriginal Peoples' Issues in Canada," in *Canadian Social Trends*, 1988, 11: Winter, pp. 9–17.

³ See Brian Fawcett, *Cambodia, A book for people who find television too slow* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1987).

Hx
 Elliott Leyton. *Hunting Humans: The Rise of the Modern Multiple Murderer*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1986.

There has been a dramatic increase in the frequency of multiple murders in recent years. While only one or two multiple murderers surfaced during the pre-World War II years, seven were hunting humans during the 1960s, seventeen in the 1970s, and twenty-five emerged in the period from 1980 to 1984.¹ These murderers do not generally kill for profit or sex. They may not even have known their victims.

Why has the frequency of multiple murders increased? What motivates people to commit seemingly irrational homicide? These are the subjects of Elliott Leyton's *Hunting Humans*. Drawing entirely on secondary sources, Leyton examines the cases of serial killers who, like Kemper, Bundy, DeSalvo, and Berkowitz, methodically killed their victims over time, and mass murderers like Essex and Starkweather, who killed a number of victims in one isolated event.

Leyton maintains that serial and mass murders are not the result of psychopathy, sociopathy, or any other form of "insanity." While many multiple murderers report abusive, if not sadistic parents, Leyton maintains that the killings are not related to early childhood experiences, hatred for the mother, Oedipal complexes, or the presence of an extra "y" chromosome. Instead, Leyton argues that multiple murderers kill to make a statement; multiple murderers are involved in a "class war," killing to wreak vengeance on a society which denies them socially approved roles and upward mobility (pp. 137, 149). Leyton claims that everyone has the capacity to kill without remorse, to kill without guilt: in other words, to "hunt humans." Only fortuitous circumstances prevent the rest of society from erupting into a "war of all against all" (p. 293).

Leyton argues that the rise of the modern mass murderer is related to what Durkheim, an early French sociologist, referred to as "anomic" societies, where an individual's freedom to pursue goals of self-advancement creates unlimited and unrealistic aspirations which cannot be fulfilled. Modern "mass" societies lack the kind of social cohesion characteristic of earlier times, producing a sense of dislocation and meaninglessness. The dramatic rise in mass murders is the result of the failure of modern institutions to integrate their members. That freedom from church, state, family, and community has become a double-edged sword which entails "heavy penalties to society—not least of which was the rate of multiple murder." Having failed to find a socially acceptable role, the mass murderer experiences an "internal social crisis, when he realizes that he cannot be what he wishes to be—cannot live his version of the American dream" (p. 294). Quoting Durkheim, Leyton states that the mass murderer is not the

contented man, who "vaguely realizes the extreme limit set to his ambitions and aspires to nothing beyond"

[He] feels that it is not well to ask more. Thus, an end and a goal are set to his passions....This relative limitation and the moderation it involves, make men contented with their lot while stimulating them moderately to improve it; and this average contentment causes the feeling of calm, active happiness, the pleasure in existing and living which characterizes health for societies as well as for individuals. (p. 293)

The multiple murderer is instead "inculcated with an ambition—or a 'dream' which either circumstances rob from him ... or which he cannot feel free in living." Leyton claims that mass murderers are politically conservative and are searching for a socially approved niche which will give them a "coherent and socially constructed identity." Because they have failed to attain the desired but elusive upward mobility, they attack "society," or at least the embodiments of culturally prescribed values, the middle class, in "manly avenging violence" (p. 298).

The presence of "cultural forms," like competitive individualism, a narcissistic preoccupation with the self, and the acceptance of violence as part of everyday life, contributes to the distancing of the murderer from the act of murder. As Leyton states, the unprecedented levels of mass murders "require the existence of cultural forms that can mediate between killer and victim in a special sense—ridding the potential victims of any humanity and the potential killer of any responsibility" (p. 293).

Leyton concludes his study of multiple murders by contrasting types of mass killings in other societies and time periods. He argues that in pre-industrial societies the multiple murderer was not the aspiring, upwardly mobile worker who suffered from anomie and "cultural forms" which encourage individualism and violence. In pre-industrial societies, the multiple murderer was an aristocrat who preyed on peasants. During industrialization, the typical mass murderer became "most commonly a new bourgeois who preyed on prostitutes" (p. 276). The infamous Jack the Ripper may have been an example.² Leyton states:

[The] prevailing "need" of the era's economic formations was to discipline the lower orders into accepting the timetable of the machine and industrial employment, then this form of homicide can be usefully seen as the means by which these new members of the new middle class took the prevailing ethos to its logical conclusion. In killing the failures and the unruly renegades from the system, and doing it with such obvious pleasure, they acted as enforcers of the new moral order Thus for each historical epoch, both the social origins of the killers and the social characteristics of their victims are highly predictable; they are thus very much men of their time. (p. 269)

However, there are a number of fundamental problems with Leyton's account of the modern multiple murderer. The most serious problems concern the data and methodology on which *Hunting Humans* is based. While Leyton acknowledges that the case studies he uses may not be representative, he nevertheless attempts to generalize as if they were. As a result, he makes broad and far-reaching statements about the characteristics of multiple murderers which cannot be supported by the empirical evidence.

Second, while Leyton denigrates psychiatrists for "denying their patients any insight into their own condition" (p. 176), he is also very selective and refuses to let the case histories speak for themselves. In fact, Leyton's method is to decipher the acts and autobiographies of mass murderers as though they were codes: "For all our multiple murderers the *content* of their ideas matters not at all [We] must search for commonalities if we are to comprehend this social phenomenon" (emphasis in the original, p. 29; see also pp. 129, 180).

But this methodology is not without pitfalls. By searching the records for a common cause, Leyton is forced to ignore obvious differences between killers. For example, Leyton claims that multiple murderers are "class conscious" (p. 30), are involved in a "class war," and kill the class above them as atonement for their inability to advance in the social hierarchy (p. 298).

However, while Bundy may fit this model—he was illegitimate, working-class, and killed mainly university students—DeSalvo does not. Leyton asserts that the victims of DeSalvo's private war were from "bourgeois areas—once fashionable, but now in genteel decline," and that these areas provided him with "lower-middle-class targets." In fact, DeSalvo's targets were generally of his own social standing.³ Many were retired women, nurses, nurses' aides, or students. How DeSalvo's killing could be characterized as a class war is difficult to defend. To make matters worse, Leyton does not even attempt to explain what he means by class or define lower-middle class or upper-working class.

Applying Leyton's thesis of class war to recent multiple murders on the West Coast also makes little sense. The "Green River" killer, for instance, murdered mainly young prostitutes picked up in the Seattle-Tacoma airport area. Many of the fifteen young women recently murdered in Vancouver, British Columbia, were also prostitutes. While the Atlanta killings involved boys or young men, they were certainly not middle or upper-working class. Rather, they were residents of public housing projects.⁴ These instances of multiple murders do not fit the pattern of class war which Leyton claims has emerged in modern industrial societies.

Finally, because of the focus on commonalities, one cause, and one exclusive "message," Leyton totally ignores the obvious rage and utter disgust serial killers have had for women. Bundy, for example, mutilated his victims and practised necrophilia. DeSalvo shoved wine bottles into old women and tied

bows around their necks with their pantyhose after he had killed them. Leyton, however, does not consider misogyny, or the hatred of women, as significant in multiple murders, despite the pervasiveness of cultural forms which degrade women. Nor is the child abuse reported by some of Leyton's multiple murderers taken seriously enough even as a contributing factor to the rage mass murderers appear to express.⁵

Instead, Leyton reduces the killings to a strange kind of "class war" where the targets are not capitalists, but elderly, poor, and so-called middle-class women. But why were women the principal victims? Leyton shows that sex was not the main issue. According to some killers, it was merely an added bonus. In fact, both DeSalvo and Berkowitz made numerous statements concerning the stupidity of the women they killed: they thought that women needed punishment, that they needed a lesson.

One explanation for this attitude is a backlash against the attempts by women to gain social equality. It cannot be ruled out that some multiple murderers may have acted out their fears and rage at being denied social mobility while some women appeared to be "moving ahead." Frustration might have unconsciously driven these conservative males to become agents of social control: killing to "keep women in their place," to teach all women a lesson.

Leyton almost recognizes this possibility himself when he states that multiple murderers were expressing "manly avenging" rage (p. 72). Yet he ignores the implications of this insight, searching instead for a common cause for murder in Durkheim's conservative theory of social change.

It may be, however, that not everyone has the capacity to become a multiple murderer, that there are no "innate" tendencies which traditional institutions (the church, the family, etc.) need to control. A simpler explanation is that, life in a society dominated by the ethos of profit maximization for its own sake, results in the degradation of all life. It is not tradition which needs to be restored. As feminists have argued, Judeo-Christian beliefs, the Church, the family, etc., have traditionally fostered misogyny.

In *Hunting Humans*, multiple murderers express their so-called class consciousness by their possession of a dead body or its parts. Multiple murderers are not *protesting* a system as much as they are *defending* conservative values. Their actions simply reinforce the view of women as objects, as commodities, as disposable.

Alan Dutton

⁵ See Leyton, 1986, Table 1, pp. 188-89. There are, however, inevitable problems in accurately measuring the rate of multiple murders. Some of the increase may in fact be due to an increased awareness of multiple murders, and better reporting.

² Leyton does not consider the theory that "Jack the Ripper" was a combination of people involved in an attempt to dispose of a possible heir to the British throne.

³ DeSalvo specialized in working-class elderly women. He killed a fifty-five-year-old Latvian immigrant, an eighty-five-year-old, a seventy-five-year-old, a sixty-five-year-old practical nurse, a sixty-seven-year-old nurse, a sixty-nine-year-old retiree, and a fifty-eight-year-old woman who worked on an assembly line. Only later in his "career" did DeSalvo develop the courage to kill young women. But even these young women were not "middle-class." He killed a twenty-year-old student, a twenty-three-year-old secretary; he failed at killing a twenty-nine-year-old German-born waitress (the ethnic origin of his wife, who had denied him sexual relations since his convictions on charges of rape and sexual molestation), a twenty-three-year-old graduate student, a young industrial designer, and a nineteen-year-old nurse's aide.

⁴ See *The Vancouver Sun*, 17 April 1989, p. A3

⁵ Kemper, for example, was locked by his mother in her basement for months. DeSalvo saw his mother repeatedly beaten by his father and was sold as a slave along with his sisters. While it is still not clear if Bundy experienced child abuse, he had early fixations about death and reported a fascination with violent pornography. Berkowitz, too, had emotional problems as a child and lacked any kind of respect for or rapport with his mother. Leyton dismisses these experiences as causes of multiple murder.

H 1981 report - to be Fabiano's Thesis at U of Ottawa
 Robert R. Ross and Elizabeth Fabiano. *Time to Think: A Cognitive Model of Delinquency Prevention and Offender Rehabilitation*. Tennessee: Institute of Social Sciences and Arts, Inc., 1985.

From the moment a man or woman is charged with a criminal offence until the final parole hearings, the paramount concern is the protection of society—both immediate and longterm. For that reason, one hopes that the individual, once convicted, will be rehabilitated through effective correctional programs. But even a glance at the prevailing recidivism rates shows that prisons do not offer an environment that corrects. As Ross and Fabiano argue, what prisons *do* offer is “time to think.”

Time to Think: A Cognitive Model of Delinquency Prevention and Offender Rehabilitation is based on the idea that criminal behaviour is evidence of a lack of certain cognitive or thinking skills. This deficit, according to Ross and Fabiano, is in the general areas of rational self-analysis, self-control, means-end reasoning, critical thinking, and interpersonal problem solving. *Time to Think* is not, however, a theory of crime, nor does it uproot other sociological models of crime. Rather, it is compatible with them and offers programs for offender rehabilitation and, therefore, crime prevention.

Ross and Fabiano state that focussing on the cognitive functioning of offenders is not a new idea. In fact, researchers have been working in this area since the 1950s. Initially, the research findings were rejected because they did not fit with prevailing social, political, and economic theories. For over thirty years, “cognitive” work has remained isolated, with no extant integrated or comprehensive study. Ross and Fabiano attempt to fill this gap with a thorough examination of earlier studies of cognitive development and of the programs now available. Their thoroughness makes *Time to Think* a valuable reference tool and handbook.

By examining the kinds of thinking offenders demonstrate and the cognitive skills they lack, Ross and Fabiano suggest that offenders are action-oriented and impulsive. Confronted with a problem, offenders act without analyzing the consequences; and, once a decision is made, offenders often stick to it rigidly. Their reasoning may be limited, the world being seen in absolute terms with little appreciation for the complexities of social interactions. Victims of crime may be of little concern since offenders may be without empathy, lacking the ability to see from another's perspective. And, once caught, offenders tend to externalize blame by shifting it to events beyond their control.

In linking cognition and crime, the researchers examine two different aspects of thinking: impersonal cognition (thinking which deals with the physical world) and interpersonal cognition (thinking which deals with people

and their interactions). Offenders seem to have difficulty with interpersonal cognition. Their impulsive behaviour also suggests an inability to use interpersonal problem-solving skills, possibly reflecting a failure to give careful thought to how to respond in a given situation or an inability to talk about a problem, with the result of poorly regulated behaviour. These difficulties imply that offenders may not have learned to tolerate frustration or control the desire for immediate gratification. With such an action-oriented cognitive pattern, they are likely to focus only on the immediate benefits of behaviour and be unable to see the longterm effects.

The cognitive model, therefore, is based on the assumption that the primary target for rehabilitation is offenders' *thinking*. That thinking may reflect deficits in the early childhood environment or learning opportunities rather than a deficit in learning capacity. And, while it is not possible to change intellectual ability, it is possible—through cognitive training techniques—to learn how to use intelligence more effectively. Cognitive training, in other words, may help offenders analyze problems and respond to them in a more prosocial manner.

Through an examination of reports on correctional programs, based in part on recidivism rates, Ross and Fabiano found that all successful programs were multi-faceted. That is, the programs were flexible, offering different combinations of training techniques to offenders. Ross and Fabiano studied, in all, 111 programs, which they categorized as effective cognitive, effective non-cognitive, ineffective cognitive, and ineffective non-cognitive. Amongst these, they found that the most effective programs involved significant use of cognitive training.

In the course of their studies, the researchers found evidence that the cognitive functioning of offenders differed from that of non-offenders. And they found support for the view that offenders' thinking patterns may be associated with criminal behaviour and, subsequently, with rehabilitation. Ross and Fabiano, consequently, give close attention to areas such as self-control/impulsivity, self-talk, concrete vs. abstract thinking, cognitive rigidity, fantasy, and laws of control. They come to the following general conclusions:

- Many offenders exhibit inadequacies in their development of a number of cognitive skills. These inadequacies may limit their ability to function effectively in a prosocial manner.
- Not all offenders evidence inadequate cognitive development.
- Many correctional programs which provide a cognitive training component have been effective in reducing the recidivism of juvenile, adolescent, and adult offenders.
- Cognitive training may be critical to the success of these programs. (p. 117)

At the end of *Time to Think*, Ross and Fabiano offer and discuss twenty-four programs as a "menu" from which to select appropriate combinations. The discussion suggests that effectiveness can be maximized if programs have a variety of cognitive training components designed to improve functioning in a number of cognitive skills. In addition, as long as programs do not have the *appearance* of therapy, offenders may find them appealing.

Ross and Fabiano state:

Prisons provide time to think, but time alone may not be a good teacher. Unfortunately, many prisons "lack any of the elements of experience required for intellectual, social or moral growth" (Ayers, 1976). Most are cognitive slums; ghettos of impoverished thinking and inadequate stimulation where cognitive lethargy rather than cognitive development is promoted. (p. 207)

The researchers point out that careful assessment is a prerequisite to program selection. To that end, they offer a review of the standard, objective procedures for assessing cognitive functioning levels and appropriate, individualized assessment devices. They argue that, "unless there is a generalized cognitive deficit, there seems to be little advantage (and considerable waste) in providing general cognitive training only in a specific skill" (p. 282). Assessment success, they suggest, depends on such dimensions as capacity vs. content, ability vs. performance, impersonal vs. interpersonal cognition, and, of course, cognitive level. To make certain they are not misunderstood, the researchers also include an extensive list of assessment test combinations which appear to include the cognitive skills that may be lacking in the offender. The implication of this section is that a multi-faceted *assessment* is as important as a multi-faceted *program*.

As mentioned, Ross and Fabiano provide readers with a valuable reference tool or handbook covering such topics as the cognitive deficits of offenders, past and present correctional programs, appropriate assessment procedures and test combinations, and effective cognitive training programs. Through extensive literature searches, the researchers lead the reader carefully and systematically through the historical perspectives on cognition and crime towards rehabilitation programs that *work*—programs evaluated, in part, by reduced recidivism rates. Ross and Fabiano's arguments are strongly supported by evidence gained in their extensive literature search. The various cognitive deficits exhibited by offenders are documented in detail and outlined in virtually every chapter. (This exposition, however, tends to be the one weakness of the text as the detail becomes tiresome to the reader. On the other hand, as a reference tool, the book's strength is based on such detail.) The otherwise dry critique of the large number of studies is given some relief by the attacks on Yochelson and Samenow's alternative point of view.

The arguments about thinking skills discussed in this substantial and convincing work are generalizable. For example, impulsive behaviour—and not just *criminally* impulsive behaviour—may have a cognitive component involving failure to rehearse responses internally at the verbal level. Similarly, a limited ability to think abstractly may prevent the development of a clear sense of purpose and goal formation. The analysis offered is therefore useful for other populations and need not be limited to offenders.

Based on the premise that cognition is an important factor in criminal behaviour, without discounting the genuine importance of social and environmental factors, Ross and Fabiano's central argument is consistent with that of the Classical School of Criminology: offenders are responsible for their criminal behaviour because they *choose* to commit crimes. Cognitive deficits do not pardon criminal behaviour; they simply make it seem appropriate to the offender.

Karen Almond

Icehouse Blues

It was too late to go
to St Anthony's as you
stood and slipped off your
blue dress, your hair a halo
in the setting sun, your skin
suffused with red as I watched
you, your hands knotted my
hair as I leant over and kissed
your long legs and the inside
of your thighs fragrant with
your warm scent and traced my
tongue along the line of your
panties to the hollow of your hip
and pulled you down on your knees
as you straddled me, silk-covered
lips sliding over my length and
you gasped and fucked my ear with
your tongue as I sucked and bit
berry-like nipples hard and thrusting
between my lips, then you shoved
me away and stood trembling, saying
we should wait, we were going
too fast as we got dressed and left.

Prisoners of love.

Bruce Chester
Kent Prison, General Population

Front cover: *The British Columbia Penitentiary, under construction*
Next issue: *The International Prisoner* \$4/single copy